X-FILES!

DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT'S

COMICS INTERVIEW

#147

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THE X-FILES EPISODE GUIDE!

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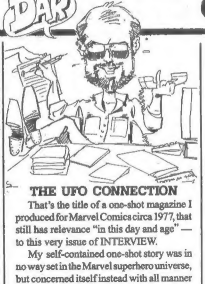

THE UFO CONNECTION

That's the title of a one-shot magazine I produced for Marvel Comics circa 1977, that still has relevance "in this day and age" — to this very issue of INTERVIEW.

My self-contained one-shot story was in no way set in the Marvel superhero universe, but concerned itself instead with all manner of X-traordinary phenomena, such as pyramid power, ancient Egypt, and aliens.

A case for Scully and Mulder, for sure, except that of course the X-Files wasn't X-tant back then, although our eternal fascination with the unknown and the unanswered was as strong then as it is now and probably always will be.

Friends and professional associates of mine at the time of "The UFO Connection" included **Jim Salicrup** and **Dwight Zimmerman**, now two of the top guys at Topps Comics, which brings us the X-FILES in comics form — and none other than **Don McGregor**, interviewed in this issue as well, who helped me with some rough dialogue for the story and thereby saved me from the Dreaded Deadline Doom.

But that's not all.

For the first and only time in print . . . until now . . . I brought up in my editorial introduction an unsolved mystery, a case of my own — worthy of the X-Files — that still remains open.

My own case of close encounters.

That's right, I've really seen animate alien beings with my own eyes!

Weird and strange as it may sound, the best way to describe what I saw is an animated, living pair of scissors. I was a child, but there was an adult witness, as well, my grandma, who chased the thing around the room with a broom before it escaped outside. Insofar as I am aware, there is no species on Earth that resembles the "scissors creature" we both saw.

There were other incidents, with a blue, hovering globe (yes, UFO) and a metal robot, never explained. Thus, I have had my share of *close encounters* and my curiosity is aroused.

It is, I think, this fascination with the unknown and the unknowable, that is so compellingly tapped into by TV's THE X-FILES.

What do you think?

~Dave

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"THE X-FILES is shooting out of the gate. It's impos-

REALLY? WHAT ABOUT HAVING YOUR CRIMES EXPOSED?
WHAT ABOUT PROOF THAT YOU'VE NOT ONLY BEEN CONCEALING THE TRUTH, BUT THAT YOU'VE BEEN ENDANGERING COUNTLESS LIVES?

X-

Who knows what lurks in the shadows at the dead of night? Who dares explain what cannot be explained by science and fact? Mulder and Scully, the agents from TV's THE X-FILES attempt their best every week on Fox. They've now recruited renowned comics scribe Stefan Petrucha — best known for his work on DUCKMAN, META-4, and SQUALOR — to recount their exploits for a comics audience. Every month in the startlingly successful Topps comic, Petrucha crafts the tales readers were never expected to know. What some think of as fantasy and science-fiction, others know as truth. We had an opportunity to beam into

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sible to predict the planned film and the spin-off series."

FILES

cyberspace to capture a moment of Stefan's time. What follows are the bytes he shared with us.

MARK LUCAS: *What separates truth from fiction? Is what's one man's truth, another's fiction?*

STEFAN PETRUCHA: Actually, I don't think there *is* a separation between truth and fiction — I think fiction is a mode of conveying. In fact, I believe it's the form closest to "reality." Science, history, philosophy and whatnot, all take a piecemeal approach to analyzing and representing the world. Fiction, to my mind, has the potential to replicate the *entire* human experience, and when discussing truth, what other experience can we humans discuss?

MARK: *THE X-FILES explores the outer limits of our imaginations every week. Should we take all of this with a grain of salt and a wink of the eye, or is this the truth that we're just learning now?*

STEFAN: Watch that calendar, kids. Five years to the millennium. It's no accident that we're starting to hear about all these right-wing conspiracy groups. Humans are a superstitious lot; we love to believe in the end of the world or the beginning of a strange new world. I think we need to believe that *something* is in control of life — God, UFOs or secret

"THE X-FILES taps into the deep-

VITAL STATISTICS

Name: Stefan Petrucha
Age: 36
Place of Birth: The Bronx
Place of Residence: Westchester County
Education: Bronx HS of Science BA in Literature from SUNY, Purchase Certificate in Video Production from the Center for Media Arts
Occupation: Writer
Hobbies: Forteana, Computer Games
Books Read Recently: THE MYTH OF REPRESSED MEMORY, HOW TO DIGITIZE VIDEO, TINKER AT PILGRIM'S CREEK by **Annie Dillard**, THE NIGHT STALKER by **Jeff Rice**

government. Why believe something bad rather than something good is behind it all? Any kind of attention is still attention. So, fact-wise, of course, it should all be taken with a grain of salt. Especially newspaper headlines and TV journalism. Is some grand evil behind it all? I doubt it. But, it sure is convenient to believe in.

Among many other things, THE X-FILES taps into that deep-seated paranoia myth to great effect. Heck, it's not our fault the world sucks, it's the government's, or the aliens'. But, that's just the conspiracy angle. I hope this doesn't sound obvious, but of course there are many things in the world and in ourselves that we have yet to approach understanding. If the conspiracy side is the dark version, THE X-FILES also approaches the sublime with a sense of wonder and awe. Whatever's behind that shadow might be something wonderful.

Of course, it could also want to eat you.

MARK: *THE X-FILES began on Fox-TV in a poor time slot with little or no promotion. But, it's proven to be one of the most successful and talked-about new shows over the past two seasons. What do you account for this dark horse success?*

STEFAN: A conspiracy. It's those damn pinko liberals at it again.

No, just kidding. Heh-heh. I think the only reason THE X-FILES is a "dark horse" success rather than an "expected" favorite is because it's unique. People aren't willing to predict the success of something unique. The general formula is always to try to reproduce something that's already successful, rather than try something new. It's a very surface process — not a lot of depth to the aesthetic

seated paranoia to great effect."

HE PROCEEDS WITH THE ABSURD CONFIDENCE AND THE ABJECT TERROR THAT HE ALREADY KNOWS THE TRUTH.
I HAVE BEEN HIS PARTNER FOR A LITTLE OVER TWO YEARS NOW AND ONE THING I HAVE LEARNED...
...MULDER'S WORLD IS A DANGEROUS PLACE.
FIREBIRD
Part Two:
CRESCIT EUNDO*
*THE STATE MOTTO OF NEW MEXICO- "IT GROWS AS IT GOES."

"Scully and Mulder contain elements of their opposites."

"HE WAS THE FIRST TO GO TO THE SACRED SPOT WHERE GOD TOUCHED THE EARTH."
"HE TOOK SOMETHING. HE FELT HE HAD EARNED IT. HE WAS TOO YOUNG. HE DIDN'T REALIZE IT WASN'T HIS."

understanding. Right now, I imagine, in television, movies and other media, there are folks trying to replicate the X-FILES formula. Since their product will be like something that's already successful, if one of them becomes a hit, it won't be a "dark horse." It will be expected.

Past that, though, the X-FILES television show is successful for at least six reasons. In no particular order, first, the topic — strange phenomena, which straddles the grey zone between science and belief, is a sure winner with a lot of spiritual, intellectual and dramatic resonance. Second, **Chris Carter's** design for the show, in the characters of Scully and Mulder and the dark forces they face, is nothing short of brilliant. They both represent different modes of approaching the truth, yet they each contain elements of their opposites. They're also not simple caricatures — they're fleshed out human beings. Third, **David Duchovny** and **Gillian Anderson** are two charismatic, talented performers who bring those characters to life in unique and exciting ways. Fourth, the writing on the show often brilliantly combines existing genres in new and exciting ways. Fifth, the special effects are story-driven and pretty classy, I think. Sixth, as I mentioned earlier, it's almost the year 2000. The time is nigh. The show is a fine piece of work in the right place at the right time.

MARK: *It was only a matter of time before the cult success of THE X-FILES spun itself off into other media. How did the comic come about? And, more importantly, how did Stefan Petrucha (a writer known for more comedic work) end up writing it?*

STEFAN: I've been fascinated by UFOs and **Forteana** for decades. The whos, whats and wherefores of why people believe what they believe, what makes them believe, and so on has always gripped my imagination. When the show came on I watched it, and by the second or third episode, when I realized the type of integrity it had, I fell in love with it. I contacted **Jim Salicrup** and told him it would make a fantastic comic and that I should be the one to write it. Then I begged, whined and pleaded for months. And here we are. Known for more comedic work? What about NEXUS THE LIBERATOR? Actually, if you go back and read META-4, it was a cross between THE X-FILES and the New Age. The third issue contains an entire history of the UFO phenomena from ancient to present day. SQUALOR also delves into some similar topics, so I'm really continuing in the same vein. I've been writing about this stuff for years.

MARK: *Where do you come up with your ideas for stories for the comic? THE WEEKLY WORLD NEWS?*

STEFAN: I spin around in a circle for ten minutes then suddenly stop. Then I quickly write down the first thing I see. But seriously folks, over the years I've

"WHAT KIND OF SIN?"

"HARD TO SAY. HE'S GOT IT MIXED IN WITH ALL SORTS OF LOCAL MYTHS.

"HE SAYS THAT WHEN HE WAS A BOY, A FIRE GOD DECIMATED HIS VILLAGE AND NEARLY KILLED HIM.

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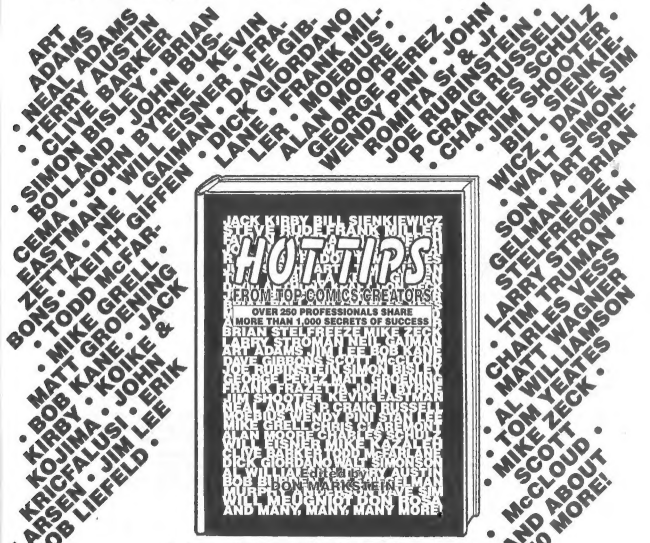
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"Every story I've done for THE X-

amassed a large library of **Forteana**, including a few signed first editions of **Charles Fort's** work. If all else fails, I hit the library.

MARK: *Have you ever researched some of the stories told in this series? Are we denying ourselves the truths of extraterrestrial life forms and afterlives and such?*

STEFAN: Every story I've done for THE X-FILES comic has some research behind it — some more than others. I think it's important for the book for it to have that weight of reality, and the things I find out make terrific fodder for stories. Are we denying ourselves the truth? How would I know? If anyone comes up to you and says, "I know the truth," doubt it.

MARK: *How does the comic differ from the TV show? Are you attempting to steer it in a different direction?*

STEFAN: Well, none of the pictures in the comic move, and we don't have the terrific presence of **Duchovny** and **Anderson.** Past that, as I've said elsewhere, it costs as much to draw a cup of coffee as it does to draw the Siberian tundra, so we don't have the same sort of budget limitations. For some stories I try to pick locales or events that would be difficult to replicate on a TV show budget — to take advantage of that fact. Past that, though, and I think this has just happened by accident, the show uses historical events as very remote starting points for many of their episodes. I think the comic tends to be more centered on those historical oddities.

By historical I don't mean old, just documented.

MARK: *The early issues of the comic have gone into reprintings and collections. This is probably your most-read work. What do you account for this?*

STEFAN: Obviously, in large part, the success of the television show. I don't kid myself — we're riding some very *big* coat-tails here. But, I'm also very proud and pleased that the quality of the work we're producing keeps the readers coming back. A lot of my previous work was

(...)
THAT'S NENETS-- A FINNO-UGRIC LANGUAGE. HIS NAME IS KHOBKA. HE'S FROM THE TUNGUSKA BASIN IN SIBERIA.
HE WANTS TO KNOW YOUR FRIEND'S NAME.
MULDER?

FILES comic has research behind it."

with original, non-super-hero characters. Given the fact that I had no name, in this market — hell, in the comic market for the last few decades — this is a tough nut to crack. The fate of many of those books was decided before the first issue came out. This time, I got incredibly lucky. I'm adapting a popular, aesthetically pleasing show that deals with my favorite topic. In some sense, I'm finally getting my work to the *right* audience. These people, many of whom are first-time comic readers, many of whom are female, defying the demographics of other successful comics, like the same sort of stuff I do. Somebody up there got tired of disliking me.

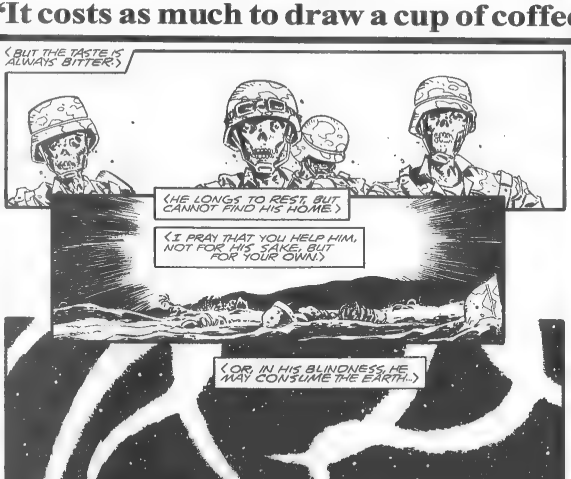
MARK: *Is there a possibility of more X-FILES comics? How about a graphic novel?*

STEFAN: Well, we've got the upcoming X-FILES digest and a graphic novel, which I'm not supposed to discuss the details of. I love the longer format of both. Sometimes I feel a little "squished" in the 22 page format — and the breathing room is a delight.

MARK: *The comic actually made it into TV GUIDE this past summer, with an originally story printed in the mid-July edition. This was a first! How'd this come*

"NO, HIS FIRST NAME."
"FOX."
"WUH, THAT MADE HIM HAPPY. SOMETHING ABOUT HIS TOTEM NOT FORGETTING HIM AFTER ALL. NOW HE FEELS HE CAN ATONE FOR HIS ... SIN."

"It costs as much to draw a cup of coffee


〈BUT THE TASTE IS ALWAYS BITTER〉
〈HE LONGS TO REST, BUT CANNOT FIND HIS HOME.〉
〈I PRAY THAT YOU HELP HIM, NOT FOR HIS SAKE, BUT FOR YOUR OWN.〉
〈OR, IN HIS BLINDNESS, HE MAY CONSUME THE EARTH!〉
LAS CRUCES 78 MILES

about?

STEFAN: An amazing event following a series of amazing events. The truth is out there. Anyway, my understanding is that TV GUIDE approached Topps. Topps, naturally, said, "Yes." Doing a story in those smaller than usual five pages (about three pages of a standard comic) was more an intellectual puzzle than a literary exercise. It was really a question of distilling the essence of THE X-FILES. There wasn't room for much else. But, I'm pleased to say, I think **Charles Adlard** and I pulled it off. Of course, I hope this will bring even more folks into the comic stores, looking for THE X-FILES and other comics.

MARK: *How long do you see this lasting? Are we upon the next STAR TREK phenomenon, or is the tail-end of the latest TV fad?*

STEFAN: Impossible to predict. Since the ratings are still going up, I think we're past the "fad" stage. The merchandising is just getting into gear now. Five years? Seven? Who knows? I really don't like

as it does to draw the Siberian tundra."

the STAR TREK comparison. That franchise, after all, has been in development for thirty years — and it started off as a financial failure. THE X-FILES, starting with season two, is shooting out of the gate. It's impossible to predict where it'll wind up. That may depend on the planned film and the spin-off series. I just don't know.

MARK: *What's next for Stefan Petrucha? Going into the field to join our agents?*

STEFAN: X-FILES, X-FILES, X-FILES. I am hoping the success of the series will allow me to bring back SQUALOR or META-4, or find a home for a few other new projects. Time will tell.

MARK: *Let's close this by asking, do you believe in ghosts . . . an afterlife . . . UFO's . . . the whole picture?*

STEFAN: The reading I've done has convinced me that the vast majority of the "cases" in the strange phenomena genre are utter nonsense. There are one or two that leave me wondering. Like everyone else, I'd love to see some "concrete proof." Unfortunately, most writers in the field seem to bandy the phrase around without knowing what it means, equating it with advertising slogans like "New & Improved!" Ah, well. The truth is out there . . .

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INTERNET X-FILES EPISODE GUIDE

Version 1.85CI
by Cliff Chen

Background

THE X-FILES is a FOX show created by Chris Carter dealing with two FBI agents who work with the "X-Files," cases which could not be explained easily and often involve the paranormal. The show is filmed in Vancouver, British Columbia. The show premiered on September 10, 1993 and is normally shown Fridays at 9 PM (Eastern/Pacific) and 8 PM (Central/Mountain). The show will return for a third season.

There are several satellite feeds for the show. However, T1/7 on Fridays at 1 PM is recommended.

THE X-FILES is broadcast in North America, but is also shown in Australia, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan and the UK. All dates herein reflect only North America.

If you wish to write in appreciation/ support of the show, the addresses are:

Chris Carter
Executive Producer
"The X-Files"
Fox Broadcasting Company
10201 W. Pico Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90064

Jonathan Littman
Vice President of Current Programming
Fox Broadcasting Company
P.O. Box 900
Beverly Hills, CA 90123

***Note:** The different addresses for Fox are more or less interchangable. Regardless of the one you use, your correspondence should reach its destination.*

E-mail can be sent to comment on the show at:

the_xfiles@delphi.com

Also, Charles Kennedy, the Vice President of Programming Research at Fox has obtained an Internet address where you can send e-mail to comment on their shows, please include "X-Files" in your subject to help them sort the mail. His address is:

foxnet@delphi.com

Fan mail for either David or Gillian can be sent to:

David/Gillian
c/o X-FILES Production Office
Building 10
110-555 Brooks Bank Ave
North Vancouver, B.C.
Canada V7J 3S5

Creation's Official X-FILES Fan Club is about to open its membership. However, the address has not been finalized. In the meantime, they can be contacted at the following address:

The Official X-FILES Fan Club
411 North Central Ave
Suite 300
Glendale, CA 91203

There is an older, more established fan club, which you can contact by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

The X-FILES Fan Club
P.O. Box 3138
Nashua, NH 03061-3138
(Canadian address)
c/o **S. Bartle**
4404 Perry Street
Vancouver, B.C.
CANADA V5N 3X5'

Cast of Characters

(alphabetically by actor's name):

Agent Dana Katherine Scully (**Gillian Anderson** — pronounced JILL-ee-an)

Dr. Dana Scully plays the skeptic, insisting that everything has a logical scientific explanation, although her exposure to the X-Files certainly has given her cause to question her own beliefs. She was assigned to work with Agent Mulder to keep an eye on him and determine if his activities are worth the time he spends working on them. She was recruited out of medical school and saw the FBI as a place to distinguish herself.

Agent Fox "Spooky" Mulder (**David Duchovny** — pronounced doo-KUV-nee)

Agent Fox Mulder is one of the FBI's greatest detectives with his photographic memory and his background as a psychologist which has helped him to profile many serial killers. His interest in the paranormal made him dig into the X-Files and also gave some higher officials in the bureau cause to believe him eccentric, reinforcing the nickname "Spooky" which he received in the academy. His fascination with extraterrestrial life began in his childhood when his sister disappeared — Fox claims she was abducted by aliens.

Other Important Players:

Section Chief Scott Blevins (**Charles Cioffi**)

Head of the Office of Professional Responsibility who was the one who assigned Scully to the X-Files division to keep an eye on Mulder.

"Smoking Man" (**William B. Davis**)

A quiet man of whom little is known, but he does seem to hold a position of power even though much of his job entails storing top secret items in the Pentagon. (Note: The name "Smoking Man" was taken from the credits following "Tooms.")

"Deep Throat" (**Jerry Hardin**)

This mysterious and influential man first appeared to warn Mulder about Ellens Air Force Base. He has provided Mulder with a lot of classified information, and in doing so, places his own life in danger. His reasons for helping Mulder are his own, but he claims that it is a form of penitence. (Note: The name "Deep Throat" was given to him by the writers and was first spoken aloud in "The Erlenmeyer Flask.")

Agent Alex Krycek (**Nicholas Lea**)

Krycek insinuates himself as Mulder's partner while Mulder and Scully are kept divided. While he appears to be a believer, his agenda definitely doesn't jibe with Mulder's.

Assistant Director Walter S. Skinner (**Mitch Pileggi**)

One of the heads of the FBI who often answers to a higher authority regarding the X-Files. However, he has proven himself to be sympathetic to Mulder and is not one who blindly follows orders.

"Mr. X" (**Steven Williams**)

An acquaintance of Deep Throat who also has given Mulder secret information to further his investigations. However, unlike Deep Throat, this information seems to be given reluctantly. (Note: The name "Mr. X" was given by the writers.)

"The Lone Gunmen" Frohike (**Tom Braidwood**) Langly (**Dean Haglund**) Byers (**Bruce Harwood**)

This is the nickname given to this trio of editors who produce a publication entitled "The Lone Gunman." Mulder is friends with the three and has found them to be a useful source of secret information, despite their eccentricly paranoid views of the US government.

Episodes

1.1 Pilot: "The X-Files" 9/10/93
writer: **Chris Carter**
director: **Robert Mandel**

Dr. Scully is given the assignment to watch over the activities of a certain Agent Mulder and decide if his work is worthwhile to the FBI. He takes her to investigate the murder of several high school classmates in Oregon whom he believes have been experimented on by aliens.

Guest cast: Billy Miles (**Zachary Ansley**); Section Chief Scott Blevins (**Charles Cioffi**); Smoking Man (**William B. Davis**); Dr. Jay Nemman (**Cliff DeYoung**); Theresa Nemman (**Sarah Koskoff**); Detective Miles (**Leon Russom**)

1.2 "Deep Throat" 9/17/93
w: **Chris Carter**
d: **Daniel Sackheim**

Mulder and Scully head out to Ellens Air Force Base in Idaho, against the wishes of some very mysterious and powerful people. The investigation begins with the disappearance of one of the test pilots and leads to the implication of possible experimentation on UFOs by the military.

Guest cast: Section Chief Scott Blevins (**Charles Cioffi**); Paul Mossinger (**Michael Bryan French**); Emil (**Seth Green**); Deep Throat (**Jerry Hardin**); Col. Robert Budahas (**Andrew Johnston**); Zoe (**Latasia Lindejerg**); Kissell (**Vince Metcalfe**); Ladonna (**Monica Parker**); Anita Budahas (**Gabrielle Rose**)

1.3 "Squeeze" 9/24/93
w: **Glen Morgan** & **James Wong**
d: **Harry Longstreet**

A gruesome murder without motive, clear M.O., or point of entry bears resemblance to an X-File killer. However, the X-File cases took place in 1933 and 1963. Mulder and Scully attempt to track down and stop this century old killer.

Guest cast: Detective Frank Briggs (**Henry Beckman**); Agent Tom Colton (**Donal Logue**); Eugene Victor Tooms (**Doug Hutchison**)

1.4 "Conduit" 10/1/93
w: **Alex Gansa** & **Howard Gordon**
d: **Daniel Sackheim**

A woman who claims to have seen a UFO as a child has her teenage daughter disappear while on a camping trip. The signs seem to indicate alien involvement. But the key to solving the mystery may be the woman's young son instead of the missing daughter.

Guest cast: Sioux City Sheriff **(Michael Cavanaugh)**; Section Chief Scott Blevins **(Charles Cioffi)**; Ruby **(Tamnya Dee)**; Pennsylvania Pub Bartender **(Don Gibb)**; Tessa **(Shelley Owens)**; Kevin Morris **(Joel Palmer)**; Darlene Morris **(Carrie Snodgress)**; Holtzman **(Don Thompson)**

1.5 "The Jersey Devil" 10/8/93
w: **Chris Carter**
d: **Joe Napolitano**

The discovery of a cannibalized human body in New Jersey State Park sends Mulder and Scully to Atlantic City. Despite obvious police cover-ups, Mulder continues his investigation of what may be a missing link in human evolution. Meanwhile, Scully attends her god-son's birthday party, which leads to some reflection on her future social plans.

Guest cast: Ranger Peter Brullet **(Michael MacRae)**; Dr. Diamond **(Gregory Sierra)**; Creature **(Claire Stansfield)**; Detective Thompson **(Wayne Tippit)**

1.6 "Shadows" 10/22/93
w: **Glen Morgan & James Wong**
d: **Michael Katleman**

When two very odd corpses appear in Philadelphia, Mulder and Scully are requested to take a look at them. The investigation turns up a secretary whose employer recently committed suicide and a strange force which seems to protect her.

Guest cast: Robert Dorlund **(Barry Primus)**; Lauren Kytes **(Lisa Waltz)**

1.7 "Ghost in the Machine" 10/29/93
w: **Alex Gansa & Howard Gordon**
d: **Jerrold Freedman**

Following the electrocution of a computer company's CEO, Mulder's old partner asks for help with the case. With the advice of Deep Throat, Mulder and Scully must stop the murderer, all the while fighting off the defense department and the building itself.

Guest cast: Agent Nancy Spiller **(Gillian Barber)**; Agent Jerry Lamana **(Wayne Duvall)**; Deep Throat **(Jerry Hardin)**; Brad Wilczek **(Rob LaBelle)**; Claude Peterson **(Blu Mankuma)**

1.8 "Ice" 11/5/93
w: **Glen Morgan & James Wong**
d: **David Nutter**

When the Arctic Ice Core project's final transmission is a crazed scientist saying "We are not who we are," Mulder and Scully become part of an investigative team sent to the Alaskan site. Upon arrival, they discover that the unearthing of an unearthly parasite could spell trouble for them as well.

Guest cast: Dr. Hodge **(Xander Berkeley)**; Dr. Nancy DaSilva **(Felicity Huffman)**; Dr. Denny Murphy **(Steve Hytner)**; Bear **(Jeff Kober)**

1.9 "Space" 11/12/93
w: **Chris Carter**
d: **William Graham**

After a space shuttle launch is aborted and evidence of some bizarre sabotage is found, a NASA worker asks Mulder and Scully to take a look around. Meanwhile, the former astronaut who is in charge of the mission is apparently haunted by something he encountered during a spacewalk on a previous mission.

Guest cast: Lt. Col. Marcus Aurelius Belt **(Ed Lauter)**; Michelle Generoo **(Susanna Thompson)**

1.10 "Fallen Angel" 11/19/93
w: **Howard Gordon & Alex Gansa**
d: **Larry Shaw**

Mulder is tipped off by Deep Throat about a government cover-up of a UFO crash site. He is not the only one interested, as he discovers a fellow UFO enthusiast whose appearance seems rather coincidental. So the military tries to keep Mulder away while trying to bring a certain other being in. But when he is discovered, Mulder's position in the FBI is jeopardized.

Guest cast: Col. Calvin Henderson **(Marshall Bell)**; Max Fenig **(Scott Bellis)**; Section Chief Joseph McGrath **(Frederick Coffin)**; Deep Throat (Jerry Hardin)

1.11 "Eve" 12/10/93
w: **Kenneth Biller & Chris Brancato**
d: **Fred Gerber**

Mulder and Scully check out the curious murder of a man in Connecticut. When they discover that another man in California was killed simultaneously in the same manner, the uncanny resemblance of the two men's daughters seems more than coincidental. So, when the first child disappears, the two decide to keep an eye on the remaining child. What they find isn't alien, but rather something much more familiar.

Guest cast: Deep Throat **(Jerry Hardin)**; Dr. Sally Kendrick/Eve 6,7,8 **(Harriet Harris)**; Cindy Reardon **(Erika Krievens)**; Teena Simmons (Sabrina Krievens)

1.12 "Fire" 12/17/93
w: **Chris Carter**
d: **Larry Shaw**

An old flame of Mulder's tries to enlist his aid to protect a visiting Parliament member and lights a small spark of jealousy in Scully. Mulder must overcome his fear of fire to take on the hot-headed pyrokinetic serial killer.

Guest cast: Sir Malcolm Marsden **(Dan Lett)**; Lady Marsden **(Laurie Paton)**; Inspector Phoebe Green **(Amanda Pays)**; Bob/Cecil L'Ively **(Mark Sheppard)**

1.13 "Beyond the Sea" 1/7/94
w: **Glen Morgan & James Wong**
d: **David Nutter**

After Scully's father passes away, her skepticism is tested by a prisoner on death row who claims that by using recently gained psychic powers, he can help catch a kidnapper. Without Mulder's guidance, she must decide for herself whether or not the man's visions are truth or a by-product of her grief.

Guest cast: Captain William Scully **(Don Davis)**; Luther Lee Boggs **(Brad Dourif)**; Lucas Jackson Henry **(Lawrence King)**; Margaret Scully **(Sheila Larken)**

1.14 "GenderBender" 1/21/94
w: **Larry Barber & Paul Barber**
d. **Rob Bowman**

A series of sexually related killings confound the two agents who aren't certain if the murderer is male or female. The clues lead them to a small Amish-like community called the Kindred in Massachusetts who are more puzzling than the serial killer.

Guest cast: Sister Abigail **(Michele Goodger)**; Brother Andrew **(Brent Hinkley)**; Marty [Male] **(Peter Stebbings)**; Marty [Female] **(Kate Twa)**

1.15 "Lazarus" 2/4/94
w: **Alex Gansa & Howard Gordon**
d: **David Nutter**

During a trap set for a bank robber, a fellow agent and friend of Scully's is shot by the criminal, whom Scully shoots in turn. While the agent is brought back from apparent death, he takes on the persona of the dead criminal whom he has chased for nearly a year. Scully sticks with him during his "trauma," but Mulder believes that he is not who he is.

Guest cast: Agent Jack Willis (**Christopher Allport**); Agent Ruskin (**Jackson Davies**); Warren James Dupre (**Jason Schombing**); Lula Phillips (**Cec Verrell**)

1.16 "Young at Heart" 2/11/94
w: **Scott Kaufer & Chris Carter**
d: **Michael Lange**

A criminal captured by a younger, fresh-from-the-academy Fox Mulder seems to be making good on his promise of vengeance against the agent. Now an older, wiser Mulder must attempt to find this elusive stalker who may not be wiser . . . or older.

Guest cast: Young John Barnett (**Alan Boyce**); Agent Henderson (**Christine Estabrook**); Deep Throat (**Jerry Hardin**); Doctor at N.I.H. (**Graham Jarvis**); Dr. Joe Ridley (**Robin Mossley**); Older John Barnett (**David Petersen**); Joe Crandall (**Gordon Tipple**); Agent Reggie Purdue (**Dick Anthony Williams**)

1.17 "E.B.E." 2/18/94
w: **Glen Morgan & James Wong**
d: **William Graham**

After a downed UFO crashes near Iraqi airspace, an unmarked truck carrying its occupant is assailed in Tennessee, causing multiple UFO sightings. Drawn by the event, Mulder and Scully find themselves tracking the trailer, with the help and hindrance of Deep Throat.

Guest cast: Frohike (**Tom Braidwood**); Langly (**Dean Haglund**); Deep Throat (**Jerry Hardin**); Byers (**Bruce Harwood**); Ranheim/Frank Druce (**Peter LaCroix**)

1.18 "Miracle Man" 3/18/94
w: **Howard Gordon & Chris Carter**
d: **Michael Lange**

The inexplicable deaths of several people at the hands of a faith healer send Mulder and Scully into the Bible belt. The deaths have shaken the miracle worker's faith in his gift, but not before Mulder experiences some of the boy's power.

Guest cast: Samuel Hartley (**Scott Bairstow**); Sheriff Maurice Daniels (**R.D. Call**); Reverend Calvin Hartley (**George Gerdes**); Leonard Vance (**Dennis Lipscomb**)

1.19 "Shapes" 4/1/94
w: **Marilyn Osborn**
d: **David Nutter**

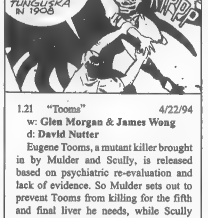
The shooting of a Native American draws Mulder's attention as the murderer believed he had shot an animal of some sort. But an Indian myth and some strange evidence seem to indicate the possibility of lycanthropy, the very phenomenon which opened the very first X-File.

Guest cast: Ish (**Jimmy Herman**); Sheriff Charles Tskany (**Michael Horse**); Lyle Parker (**Ty Miller**); Gwen Goodensnake (**Renae Morriseau**); Jim Parker (**Donnelly Rhodes**)

1.20 "Darkness Falls" 4/15/94
w: **Chris Carter**
d: **Joe Napolitano**

Mulder pulls some strings to be assigned to a case involving the disappearance of 30 loggers in Washington state. They discover that the loggers, in illegally cutting down a tree, faced a punishment far worse than what the judicial system would have done. Now the two agents must try to avoid the same dark fate.

Guest cast: Larry Moore (**Jason Beghe**); Perkins (**Barry Greene**); Steve Humphreys (**Tom O'Rourke**); Dyer (**Ken Tremblett**); Doug Spinney (**Titus Welliver**)



1.21 "Tooms" 4/22/94
w: **Glen Morgan & James Wong**
d: **David Nutter**

Eugene Tooms, a mutant killer brought in by Mulder and Scully, is released based on psychiatric re-evaluation and lack of evidence. So Mulder sets out to prevent Tooms from killing for the fifth and final liver he needs, while Scully attempts to locate more definitive evidence. Both tasks made more difficult by their superiors insistence that they work by the book.

Guest cast: Detective Frank Briggs (**Henry Beckman**); Smoking Man (**William B. Davis**); Eugene Victor Tooms (**Doug Hutchison**); Asst. Director Walter S. Skinner (**Mitch Pileggi**); Dr. Aaron Monte (**Paul Ben Victor**)

1.22 "Born Again" 4/29/94
w: **Howard Gordon & Alex Gansa**
d: **Jerrold Freedman**

A little girl is tied to the deaths of two Buffalo policemen, but the possibility that she is the murderer is ludicrous. So Mulder and Scully begin an investigation of the eight year old, turning up evidence that may help to solve a nine year old murder case. A case Mulder believes was the death of the girl's past life.

Guest cast: Dr. Sheila Braun (**P. Lynn Johnson**); Anita Fiore (**Mimi Lieber**); Michelle Bishop (**Andrea Libman**); Tony Fiore (**Brian Markinson**); Detective Sharon Lazard (**Maggie Wheeler**); Judy Bishop (**Dey Young**)

1.23 "Roland" 5/6/94
w: **Chris Ruppenthal**
d: **David Nutter**

A mentally handicapped janitor seems to be the only suspect in the murders of two members of a propulsion research team. Yet the evidence of advanced theoretical work seems to eliminate the possibility, until Mulder and Scully uncover his relationship to a scientist whose brain has been cryogenically preserved.

Guest cast: Dr. Keats (**Garry Davey**); Roland Fuller/Dr. Arthur Grable (**Zeljko Ivanek**); Mrs. Stodie (**Micole Mercurio**); Tracy (**Kerry Sandomirsky**); Dr. Frank Nollette (**James Sloyan**); Dr. Ronald Surnow (**Matthew Walker**)

1.24 "The Erlenmeyer Flask" 5/13/94
w: **Chris Carter**
d: **R.W. Goodwin**

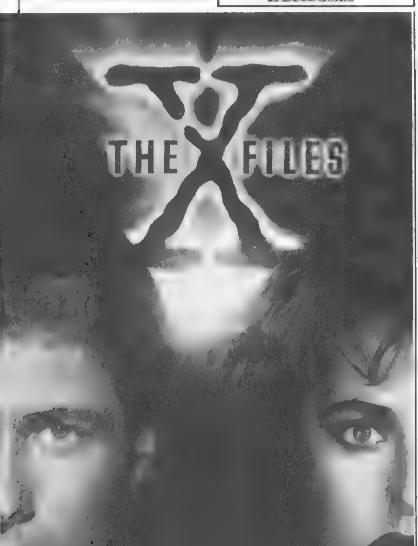
When Deep Throat points out a news story about a fugitive who apparently drowned, Mulder and Scully cannot see what makes it special. But with his insistence, they discover evidence of secret government experimentation with extra-terrestrial DNA. However, the evidence and everyone who has seen it is quickly being eliminated.

Guest cast: Smoking Man (**William B. Davis**); Dr. Anne Carpenter (**Anne DeSalvo**); Crew Cut Man (**Lindsey Ginter**); Deep Throat (**Jerry Hardin**); Dr. Terrance Allen Berube (**Ken Kramer**); Captain Roy Lacerio (**Jim Leard**); Dr. William Secare (**Simon Webb**);

2.1 "Little Green Men" 9/16/94
w: **Glen Morgan & James Wong**
d: **David Nutter**

Long after the shutdown of the X-Files division, Mulder finds his own belief in the truth waning. So when an old friend gives him a new reason to believe, he goes alone to an abandoned SETI program site in Puerto Rico. Concerned, Scully tries to contact him before someone or something else does.

Guest cast: Senator Richard Matheson (**Raymond J. Barry**); Smoking Man (**William B. Davis**); Jorge Concepcion



(**Mike Gomez**); Samantha [Age 8] (**Vanessa Morley**); Asst. Director Walter S. Skinner (**Mitch Pileggi**); Mulder [Age 12] (**Marcus Turner**)

2.2 "The Host" 9/23/94
w: **Chris Carter**
d: **Daniel Sackheim**

A man's decomposed body is found in the sewers of Newark, NJ and Mulder is given this supposedly routine murder case. But after Scully's autopsy turns up a parasite living inside the body and a sewer worker is attacked and bitten by something, it opens up a whole new can of worms.

Guest cast: Detective Norman (**Freddy Andelucci**); Agent Brisentine (**Marc Bauer**); Flukeman (**Darin Morgan**); Asst. Director Walter S. Skinner (**Mitch Pileggi**)

2.3 "Blood" 9/30/94
w: **Glen Morgan & James Wong**
d: **David Nutter**
story by: **Darin Morgan**

A recent rash of killings in the small town of Franklin, PA brings Mulder to profile the murderers. A task made more difficult by the fact that none of them had any previous history of violence and all died at the end of their berserker rages. The only clue he has is some destroyed electronics and an unknown organic substance.

Guest cast: Frohike (**Tom Braidwood**); Sheriff Spencer (**John Cygan**); Harry McNally (**Andre Daniels**); Bonnie McRoberts (**Kimberly Ashlyn Gere**); Langly (**Dean Haglund**); Taber (**John Harris**); Byers (**Bruce Harwood**); Edward Funsch (**William Sanderson**); County Supervisor Larry Winter (**George Touliatos**)

2.4 "Sleepless" 10/7/94
w: **Howard Gordon**
d: **Rob Bowman**

An audio cassette hidden in his morning paper brings Mulder to request the case of a scientist's death consistent with burning, despite the lack of any evidence of any flames or burns. He is given his request . . . along with a new partner. But together they must find the murderer before the case can be laid to rest.

Guest cast: Smoking Man (**William B. Davis**); Salvatore Matola (**Jonathan Gries**); Agent Alex Krycek (**Nicholas Lea**); Asst. Director Walter S. Skinner (**Mitch Pileggi**); Augustus Cole (**Tony Todd**); Mr. X (**Steven Williams**)

2.5 "Duane Barry" 10/14/94
w: **Chris Carter**
d: **Chris Carter**

An ex-FBI agent escapes from a mental hospital and holds several people hostage in a travel agency. Mulder and Krycek are sent in to help with the negotiations since the man claims to have been a UFO abductee. Part one of two.

Guest cast: Agent Alex Krycek (**Nicholas Lea**); Agent Lucy Kazdin (**CCH Pounder**); Duane Barry (**Steve Railsback**); Dr. Del Hakkie (**Frank C. Turner**)

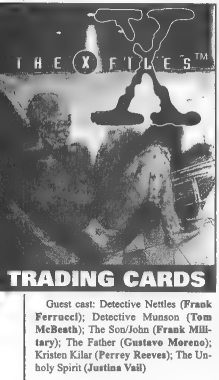
2.6 "Ascension" 10/21/94
w: **Paul Brown**
d: **Michael Lange**

Returning home to find the phone message left by Scully, Mulder immediately sets off to locate Duane Barry, but is unable to make any headway until a police video from a traffic violation yields a clue which lifts his spirits. Part two of two.

Guest cast: Smoking Man (**William B. Davis**); Margaret Scully (**Sheila Larken**); Agent Alex Krycek (**Nicholas Lea**); Asst. Director Walter S. Skinner (**Mitch Pileggi**); Duane Barry (**Steve Railsback**); Mr. X (**Steven Williams**)

2.7 "3" 11/4/94
w: **Glen Morgan & James Wong**
d: **David Nutter**
original script: **Chris Ruppenthal**

Despite Scully's absence, Mulder finds the strength to continue his work on the recently reopened X-Files. When he recognizes a Los Angeles killing as the work of the Trinity murderers, a trio of killers with a fetish for drinking blood, it gives him work in which to immerse himself.



Guest cast: Detective Nettles (**Frank Ferrucci**); Detective Munson (**Tom McBeath**); The Son/John (**Frank Military**); The Father (**Gustavo Moreno**); Kristen Kilar (**Perrey Reeves**); The Unholy Spirit (**Justina Vail**)

2.8 "One Breath" 11/11/94
w: **Glen Morgan** & **James Wong**
d: **R.W. Goodwin**

Scully mysteriously appears in a Washington D.C. hospital, kept alive almost entirely by machines. Frustrated by his inability to help her, Mulder drives himself crazy trying to find the people responsible. Though his quest for vengeance could make him exactly like those whom he despises.

Guest cast: Frohike (**Tom Braidwood**); Doctor Daly (**Jay Brazeau**); Nurse G. Owens (**Nicola Cavendish**); Captain William Scully (**Don Davis**); Smoking Man (**William B. Davis**); Langly (**Dean Haglund**); Byers (**Bruce Harwood**); Margaret Scully (**Sheila Larken**); Melissa Scully (**Melinda McGraw**); Asst. Director Walter S. Skinner (**Mitch Pileggi**); Mr. X (**Steven Williams**)

2.9 "Firewalker" 11/18/94
w: **Howard Gordon**
d: **David Nutter**

A malfunction in a robot designed for volcanic exploration yields evidence of a lifeform living in the caves. When this lifeform seemingly causes the death of a member of the research team, Mulder and Scully are flown out to the site to investigate before anyone else dies.

Guest cast: Peter Tanaka (**Hiro Kanagawa**); Eric Parker (**David Kaye**); Vosberg (**David Lewis**); Dr. Adam Pierce (**Tuck Milligan**); Jason Ludwig (**Leland Orser**); Technician (**Torben Rolfsen**); Jesse O'Neil (**Shawnee Smith**); Dr. Daniel Trepkos (**Bradley Whitford**)

2.10 "Red Museum" 12/9/94
w: **Chris Carter**
d: **Win Phelps**

Several Wisconsin teens are found wandering outside in their underwear with "He is one" scrawled on their backs. Mulder and Scully travel to investigate this aberrant behavior, though the strangest thing in this meat-producing area is a cult of vegetarian "walk-ins."

Guest cast: Beth Kane (**Gillian Barber**); Sheriff Mazeroski (**Steve Eastin**); Crew Cut Man (**Lindsey Ginter**); Richard Odin (**Mark Rolston**); Gird Thomas (**Paul Sand**)

2.11 "Excelsis Dei" 12/16/94
w: **Paul Brown**
d: **Stephen Surjik**

Mulder and Scully's latest case begins with the rape and battery of a nurse in a Massachusetts convalescent home. What makes it an X-File is her claim that her attacker was invisible. But upon their arrival, they discover that the unrest is not limited only to the live-in residents.

Guest cast: Dorothy (**Frances Bay**); Stan Phillips (**Eric Christmas**); Hal Arden (**David Fresco**); Michelle Carters, RN (**Teryl Rothery**); Gung Bittouen (**Sab Shimono**)

2.12 "Aubrey" 1/6/95
w: **Sara B. Charno**
d: **Rob Bowman**

In a dream, a policewoman experiences the memory of a serial killing and unearths the body of the FBI agent sent to investigate it nearly 50 years ago. When the serial killer strikes again, Mulder and Scully work with the detective to determine the killer's identity.

Guest cast: Mrs. Thibedeaux (**Joy Coghill**); Lieutenant Brian Tillman (**Terry O'Quinn**); Detective B.J. Morrow (**Deborah Strang**); Harry Cokely (**Morgan Woodward**)

2.13 "Iresistible" 1/13/95
w: **Chris Carter**
d: **David Nutter**

An female corpse, dug-up and mutilated, is brought to Mulder's attention by a Minnesota agent claiming it as the work of aliens. Mulder believes otherwise and is vindicated when a similarly mutilated prostitute is found. Meanwhile Scully has to deal with how this case seems to be affecting her.

Guest cast: Donald Eddie Pfaster (**Nick Chinlund**); Toews (**Robert Thurston**); Agent Bocks (**Bruce Weitz**); Agent Karen E. Kosseff (**Christine Willes**); Marilyn (**Deanida Williams**)

2.14 "Die Hand Die Verletzt" 1/27/95
w: **Glen Morgan** & **James Wong**
d: **Kim Manners**

Some teenagers' feign an occult ritual in an attempt to score and inadvertantly cause the murder of one of their group. When Mulder and Scully are called to look into the matter, the town's real worshippers attempt to hide their tracks though they fear that the boys' attempt to "get some," got them more than they thought.

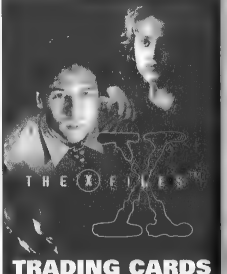
Guest cast: Phyllis H. Paddock (**Susan Blommaert**); Jim Ausbury (**Dan Butler**); Pete Calcagni (**Shaun Johnson**); Shannon Ausbury (**Heather McComb**)

2.15 "Fresh Bones" 2/3/95
w: **Howard Gordon**
d: **Rob Bowman**

When a soldier stationed at a resettlement camp for Haitians drives himself into a tree, Mulder and Scully are called by the grieving and fearful wife. Her fears of a voodoo curse seem only to be reinforced by the beliefs and actions of many of the local residents, including a few of the other soldiers.

Guest cast: Colonel Wharton (**Daniel Benzali**); Private Jack McAlpin (**Kevin Conway**); Private Kittel (**Roger Cross**); Robin McAlpin (**Katya Gardner**); Private Harry Dunham (**Matt Hill**); Lieutenant Foyle (**Peter Kelamis**); Skinny Man (**Adrien Malebranche**); Groundskeeper (**Callum Keith Rennie**); Chester Bonaparte (**Jamli Walker Smith**); Mr. X (**Steven Williams**); Pierre Bauvais (**Bruce Young**)

2.16 "Colony" 2/10/95
w: **Chris Carter**
d: **Nick Marck**
story by: **Chris Carter** & **David Duchovny**



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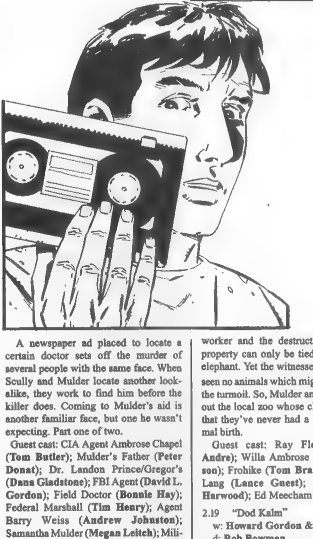


A newspaper ad placed to locate a certain doctor sets off the murder of several people with the same face. When Scully and Mulder locate another look-alike, they work to find him before the killer does. Coming to Mulder's aid is another familiar face, but one he wasn't expecting. Part one of two.

Guest cast: CIA Agent Ambrose Chapel (**Tom Butler**); Mulder's Father (**Peter Donat**); Dr. Landon Prince/Gregor's (**Dana Gladstone**); FBI Agent (**David L. Gordon**); Field Doctor (**Bonnie Hay**); Federal Marshall (**Tim Henry**); Agent Barry Weiss (**Andrew Johnston**); Samantha Mulder (**Megan Leitch**); Military Policeman (**Michael McDonald**); First Jailer (**Capper McIntyre**); Asst. Director Walter S. Skinner (**Mitch Pileggi**); Mulder's Mother (**Rebecca Toolan**); Pilot (**Brian Thompson**)

2.17 "End Game" 2/17/95
w: **Frank Spotnitz**
d: **Rob Bowman**

When Scully is taken captive by the bounty hunter, Mulder must give up a recently returned loved one in exchange. However, when his trap goes awry, Mulder tracks the hunter far to the icy north in an effort to find the one he has lost twice. Part two of two.

Guest cast: Lieutenant Terry Wilmer (**Colin Cunningham**); Bill Mulder (**Peter Donat**); Samantha Mulder (**Megan Leitch**); Asst. Director Walter S. Skinner (**Mitch Pileggi**); Pilot (**Brian Thompson**); Mr. X (**Steven Williams**)

2.18 "Fearful Symmetry" 2/24/95
w: **Steve DeJarnatt**
d: **James Whitmore, Jr.**

The death of a federal construction worker and the destruction of various property can only be tied to an escaped elephant. Yet the witnesses claim to have seen no animals which might have caused the turmoil. So, Mulder and Scully check out the local zoo whose claim to fame is that they've never had a successful animal birth.

Guest cast: Ray Floyd (**Charles Andre**); Willa Ambrose (**Jayne Atkinson**); Frohike (**Tom Braidwood**); Kyle Lang (**Lance Guest**); Byers (**Bruce Harwood**); Ed Meecham (**Jack Rader**)

2.19 "Dod Kalm" 3/10/95
w: **Howard Gordon & Alex Gansa**
d: **Rob Bowman**
story by: **Howard Gordon**

The last known position of the U.S.S. Argent was in the Norwegian equivalent of the Bermuda Triangle until a boatload of survivors is found. What particularly catches Mulder's inquisitive eye is that all of these sailors appear to have aged many decades in the course of days.

Guest cast: Halverson (**Mar Anderson**); Lieutenant Richard Harper (**Dmitry Chepovetsky**); Captain Barclay (**David Cubitt**); Ionesco (**Stephen Dimopoulos**); Olafsson (**Vladimir Kulich**); Sailor (**John McConnach**); Nurse (**Bob Metcalfe**); Burke (**Claire Riley**); Henry Trondheim (**John Savage**)

2.20 "Humbug" 3/31/95
w: **Darin Morgan**
d: **Kim Manners**

Mulder and Scully must find the paranormal among the abnormal when they are sent to investigate a long standing series of ritualistic killings which match no known patterns. The latest of which was the death of the "alligator man," just one of many sideshow acts around which the town of Gibsonton, FL is built.

Guest cast: Mr. Nutt (**Michael Anderson**); Curator (**Alex Diakun**); The Conundrum (**The Enigma**); Sheriff Hamilton (**Wayne Grace**); Jerald Glazebrook (**John Payne**); Dr. Blockhead aka Jeffrey Swaim (**Jim Rose**); Lanny (**Vincent Schiavelli**); Waiter (**Debis Simpson**); Glazebrook [older] (**Blair Slater**); Hepcat Helm (**George Tipple**); Glazebrook [younger] (**Devin Walker**)

2.21 "The Calusari" 4/14/95
w: **Sara B. Charno**
d: **Michael Vejar**

A photograph taken just previous to the death of a two year old boy yields evidence of some supernatural intervention which peaks Mulder's curiosity. When another death in the family occurs, the grandmother of the remaining child requests the aid of some Romanian ritualists in order to cleanse the home of evil.

Guest cast: Charlie/Michael Holvey (**Joel Palmer**); Golda (**Lilyan Chauvin**); Maggie Holvey (**Helena Clarkson**); Dr. Charles Burk (**Bill Dow**); Head Calusari (**Kay E. Kuter**); Steve Holvey (**Ric Reid**); Teddy Holvey (**Oliver & Jeremy Isaac Wildsmith**); Agent Karen E. Kosseff (**Christine Willes**)

2.22 "F. Emasculata" 4/28/95
w: **Chris Carter & Howard Gordon**
d: **Rob Bowman**

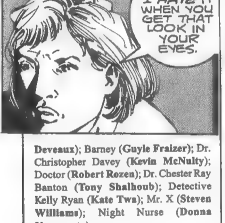
Mulder and Scully find themselves sent to a penitentiary in order to participate in the retrieval of two escaped convicts. Confused about the reason for FBI involvement, they look a little deeper and discover a highly contagious and deadly disease has infected many of the inmates, and possibly the two escapees as well.

Guest cast: Smoking Man (**William B. Davis**); Paul (**John Pyper-Ferguson**); U.S. Marshal Tepia (**Dean Norris**); Dr. Simon Auerbach (**Morris Panych**); Asst. Director Walter S. Skinner (**Mitch Pileggi**); Dr. Osbourne (**Charles Martin Smith**); Steve (**John Tench**); Angelo Garza (**Angelo Vacco**)

2.23 "Soft Light" 5/5/95
w: **Vince Gilligan**
d: **James Contner**

An ex-student of Scully's asks Mulder and Scully to help her with her first investigation concerning a number of disappearances with very few clues. Mulder ponders the idea of spontaneous human combustion but rethinks it when they find a man who is afraid of his own shadow.

Guest cast: Government Scientist (**Forbes Angus**); Second Officer (**Steve Bacic**); Detective Barron (**Nathaniel**



Deveaux); Barney (**Guyle Fraizer**); Dr. Christopher Davey (**Kevin McNulty**); Doctor (**Robert Rozen**); Dr. Chester Ray Banton (**Tony Shalhoub**); Detective Kelly Ryan (**Kate Twa**); Mr. X (**Steven Williams**); Night Nurse (**Donna Yamamoto**)

2.24 "Our Town" 5/12/95
w: **Frank Spotnitz**
d: **Rob Bowman**

Dudley, Arkansas is the site of the latest investigation for Mulder and Scully, who are sent to find a missing poultry inspector. The case takes a twist when another poultry worker is shot after she goes insane, giving Mulder a hunch that the townfolk really are what they eat.

Guest cast: Sheriff Tom Arens (**Gary Grubbs**); Doris Kearns (**Caroline Kava**); George Kearns (**John MacLaren**); Creighton Jones (**Hrothgar Matthews**); Walter Chaco (**John Milford**); Paula Gray (**Gabrielle Miller**); Dr. Vance Randolph (**Robin Mossley**); Jess Harold (**Timothy Webber**)

2.A "The Secrets of the X-Files" 5/19/95
w: **Ron Scalera & Bart Montgomery**

A one hour special retrospective on the last two seasons of the show.

Guest cast: Narrator (**Richard Courtney**)

2.25 "Anasazi" 5/19/95
w: **Chris Carter**
d: **R.W. Goodwin**
story by: **David Duchovny & Chris Carter**

The trust that Mulder and Scully have for each other is sorely tested when Mulder begins acting strangely. His aberrant behavior is compounded when the Lone Gunmen direct him to a hacker who managed to break into some very closely guarded files. So, the Smoking Man quickly takes action while Scully investigates Mulder's abnormalcy. Part one of two.

Guest cast: Frohike (**Tom Braidwood**); Thinker aka Kenneth Soona (**Bernie Coulson**); Smoking Man (**William B. Davis**); Antonio (**Aurello Dinunzio**); Bill Mulder (**Peter Donat**); Langly (**Dean Haglund**); Byers (**Bruce Harwood**); Agent Alex Krycek (**Nicholas Lea**); Agent Kautz (**Paul McLean**); Father (**Byron Chief Moon**); Josephine Doane (**Renae Morriseau**); Asst. Director Walter S. Skinner (**Mitch Pileggi**); Senior Agent (**Michael David Simms**); Albert Hosteen (**Floyd "Red Crow" Westerman**)

Awards/Recognition

During the first season, the average Nielsen ratings for THE X-FILES was 6.4 (approximately 6 million viewers), placing it 102nd out of 118 shows. The show was recognized by the Viewers for Quality Television. It has also been awarded "Best Drama Series" by the Environmental Media Awards for "Darkness Falls" and been nominated for two Emmys: Best Title Sequence and Best Music for a Title Sequence, winning the former. In addition, "The Erlenmeyer Flask" was nominated for an Edgar Award by the Mystery Writers of America for Best Episode in a Television Series.

In its sophomore year, the show improved upon its average Nielsen rating to a 14.5, ending the season 64th out of 141 shows. It also managed to be nominated for a Golden Globe for Best Television Series — Drama. Cinematographer **John Bartley** was nominated for an Outstanding Achievement Award for his work on the episode "Duane Barry" by the American Society of Cinematographers. Once again, the Viewers for Quality Television endorsed the show, but this year also nominated it for its Quality Awards in the categories of Best Drama, Best Actor in a Drama (**David Duchovny**), and Best Actress in a Drama (**Gillian Anderson**). And finally, the Television Critic's Association also nominated the show as Best Drama.

Novels

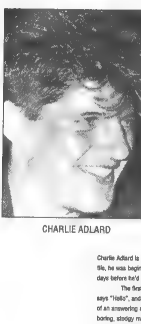
HarperPrism obtained the rights to publish a series of original X-FILES tie-in novels. The forthcoming third novel will mark the start of a new writer, **Kevin Anderson.**

#1 GOBLINS
author: **Charles Grant**
ISBN: 0-06-105414-3

Two inexplicable murders near Fort Dix, NJ see Mulder and Scully investigating them as a result of some called-in favors. With very little to go on, the ravings of an old woman about goblins don't seem so far fetched.

2 WHIRLWIND
author: **Charles Grant**
ISBN: 0-06-105415-1

The discovery of several bodies near a Konochine Indian community raises the questions as to how these people and cattle had been skinned in the matter of seconds. When Mulder and Scully arrive in New Mexico to dig deeper, they find they are met with silence and lies, not only from the Indians, but also from the local authorities.



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X-Files Artist Revealed as Alien!

Charlie Adlard is a blur, moving fast and hard to catch up with. The day I talked to him for this profile, he was beginning the process of moving all his worldly possessions into new digs. Just a few days before he'd found a ten-page fax from Topps, a script they wanted him to draw.

The first thing that hits you is that Charlie answers the phone in a very official manner. He says "Hello", and then gives his phone number. This is disconcerting. It sounds like the beginning of an answering machine. How neat. How professional. Well, Adlard is professional, but not in a boring, stodgy manner. He is witty and always looking for a laugh. His mind works quickly and in great detail, so a seemingly simple question will elicit a complicated, but very, very full answer.

Adlard is striving for simplicity in his comics, influenced by both American and European styles. He's not trying to work faster, though by American standards he's very fast. "If I had my way, all comics would be in black and white. I think the real test of a comics artist is to look at his work in black and white and see if it's still there. Mind you, having said that, I really admire artists who think about color when they're doing a color comic and send off the pages with all kinds of notes to the colorist.

"I'm always trying to get simpler. I hope twenty years from now, I'm simpler still. This doesn't mean getting less commercial, just more simple. Look at people like Mike Mignola or Frank Miller. They've both very interested in stark black and white, and you can't say that they're not commercial.

"I'm not a great sketcher. When I was in New York, I went to see George Pratt in his studio and he had a pile of sketchbooks that almost touched the ceiling. I'm not like that. I wish I was. I do tend to think, though, that my eyes function like a camera. I walk around with my eyes open, taking things in and building up an internal language."

MAIN ATTACK ©1995 The Topps Co. Art: Charlie Adlard

Currently working on *The X-Files Last Man Attacks* for Topps, Adlard has worked for Marvel (UK and US) and Marvel in the Relix of 2000 A.D.

Right now he's at a point where he's got about all the work he can handle, and that's a pretty good place to be for a guy who can pencil and ink two complete books a month. "Most English artists ink their own work, and I really prefer to pencil and ink whenever possible. I think having a separate inker is largely an American invention. The first time I ever inked someone else's work was over Keith Giffen for an American comic. It was quite a shock because when I pencil, I pretty much just lay the book out on then go back and do the rest in ink. But inking Keith's stuff, even with all the detail he put in there, I found took as much time as inking my own stuff."

Outside of comics, Adlard enjoys music and, surprisingly, television. (Insight into Charlie's personality: He's the kind of guy who admits watching television. He's an honest man.) "After working at the drawing board for a day, television is a great unwinder because you can just sit there and stare at the screen and turn your brain off. Music's not like that for me. I have the radio on when I'm working, but it's usually just pop crap because anything else will take my attention. I'll start thinking about it and the next thing you know, I'm singing and tapping my feet and the work's gone away."

Singing and tapping his feet? Yes, Charlie's into music. Into it enough to be in a band. There seems to be a trend developing across the Atlantic. British comic artists are also drummers in bands.

"I don't really know quite why that is, other than beating on drums is a great way to get out your frustrations after a day at the board. I'm in the process of moving right now, and the house I'm moving into doesn't have any neighbors to annoy and it has a room in it that will be great for the band to practice in. It's funny, because in other things I'm completely uncoordinated. I'm not good at sports, or anything that involves a ball, but behind a drum set, I get both arms going and my head banging and it's delightful."

There have been nasty rumors that Adlard is a man who enjoys a drink or two. These rumors are true, to a degree. "Because I'm British, people might assume I spend a lot of time at the pub. I have been known to have a pint or two, but our licensing laws here are so ridiculous. The pubs close at 11, and there are times on Sunday when you can't even buy alcohol at the supermarket. I think where people get the idea that the English drink so much is because everyone's trying to get their share in before the pub closes. At 8:00 there's always a great rush to the bar. I'm never one of those guys trying to get in there. And, after about five pints, I can feel my stomach bloating out under the table and I know I'm done."

If you get Charlie on the subject of movies, he has some definite opinions. He had just seen "Interview with the Vampire" before I talked to him. "You know what I really hate? I hate it when there are great gaping holes in the plot of a movie. I just want to go and find the people who made this movie and grab them and ask 'Why? *Why?*"

Charlie has no problem working with American companies, indeed, most of Charlie's work is now coming from the States. Charlie has enjoyed his collaborations with Keith Giffen, who he worked with on *Supreme* and *Mars Attacks*. "I think Keith's stuff is great. Keith's influenced as much by the Europeans as much as the American style and I like the way that he, like me, always looks for ways to avoid the obvious."

Avoiding the obvious seems to have worked for Charlie so far. His internal language and those eyes operating as a camera has worked well enough to turn Charlie into the star he is. And the end's nowhere in sight. »

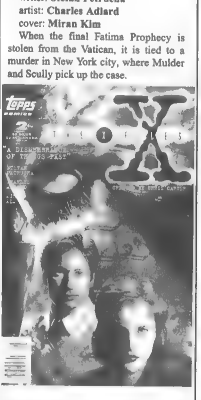
Comics

At the start of 1995, THE X-FILES comics series was made available by Topps Comics. Correspondence concerning the comic should be sent to:

"THE X-FILES"
c/o Topps Comics
1 Whitehall Street
New York, NY 10004-2109

#1 "Not To Be Opened until Xmas" January '95
writer: **Stefan Petrucha**
artist: **Charles Adlard**
cover: **Miran Kim**

When the final Fatima Prophecy is stolen from the Vatican, it is tied to a murder in New York city, where Mulder and Scully pick up the case.



Note: There was also a black and white ashcan release of the first half of this book in STAR WARS GALAXY #2.

#2 "A Dismembrance of Things Past" February '95
w: **Stefan Petrucha**
a: **Charles Adlard**
c: **Miran Kim**

The recent death of several witnesses to a UFO crash forty-seven years ago prompts someone to convince Mulder and Scully to investigate in order to protect a retired general who was also there in Neola, Kansas. Part one of two.

#3 "A Little Dream of Me" March '95
w: **Stefan Petrucha**
a: **Charles Adlard**
c: **Miran Kim**

Mulder and Scully are puzzled by the remains of a scientist found in an overturned truck in New Mexico. The bones of the scientist, who was continuing a relatives research into the Tunguska meteorite, seem to have ages thousands of years, though the man was nearly thirty. Part one of three.

5 "Firebird Part Two: Crescit Eundo" May '95
w: **Stefan Petrucha**
a: **Charles Adlard**
c: **Miran Kim**

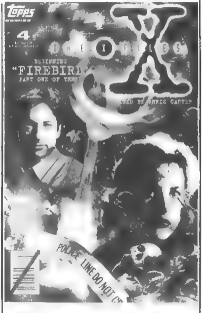
Having found Khobka, Mulder and Scully try to escape the ruined facility and the creature. Scully manages to bring the old man to safety, but Mulder is not so lucky. Part two of three.

N/A "A Trick of the Light" April '95
w: **Stefan Petrucha**
a: **Charles Adlard**
c: **Jim Sallcrup**

Mulder and Scully look into an artist whose models are disappearing.

Note: This was a special insert into HERO ILLUSTRATED #22.

#4 "Firebird Part One: Khobka's Lament" April '95
w: **Stefan Petrucha**
a: **Charles Adlard**
c: **Miran Kim**



N/A Special Edition June '95
w: **Stefan Petrucha**
a: **Charles Adlard**
c: **Miran Kim**

All of the first three comics in one release.

6 "Firebird Part Three: A Brief Authority" June '95
w: **Stefan Petrucha**
a: **Charles Adlard**
c: **Miran Kim**

Mulder is asked to speak with Khobka on behalf of the cabal, in the hopes that he knows how to stop the Firebird from destroying the entire state. Part three of three.

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The X-Files #7
"Trespassing Opera"

Writer: Stefan Petrucha
Artist: Charles Adlard
Cover Artist: Miran Kim

Fifteen people have been murdered. Each victim is found with a new inch hole drilled into the middle of their forehead. In addition, each victim is smiling. FBI special agents Dana Scully and Fox Mulder begin an X-File investigation that horrifyingly opens the door into one of the great unknowns--the future!

How do you catch a murderer who stays one step ahead of you because he claims to have had his "third eye" opened, thus allowing him to see the future? The clues the murderer deliberately leaves challenge suggest that he is able to see both past and future. Scully finds herself kidnapped by the murderer who tells her that before she dies he will give her the greatest gift of all--the ability to see into the future.

The X-Files #8
"Silent Cities of the Mind" Part 1

Writer: Stefan Petrucha
Artist: Charles Adlard
Cover Artist: Miran Kim

During a Waco-style siege near Nome, Alaska, Agent Mulder infiltrates a cracked cult that believes the Earth is hollow. After gaining their trust, Mulder is given a photograph that seems to show an Aztec city buried in the ice. The cult's leader, Enoch has set out on a search to discover the Silent City of Alaska.

An FBI raid on the cult compound precipitates a horrible explosion that Mulder barely survives.

Hoping to find Enoch, agents Scully and Mulder take a small plane into the Alaskan wilderness. Running into a raging storm the plane crashes and they awaken to find themselves prisoners of Enoch. Having found the Silent City known as Aztalan, Enoch forces Mulder to help him uncover the hidden temples

The X-Files #9
"Silent Cities of the Mind" Part 2
The stunning conclusion!

Writer: Stefan Petrucha
Artist: Charles Adlard
Cover Artist: Miran Kim

Everyone "save" General Shadenfreud die in X-FILES #7, right? Well, he's back--and FBI special agents Dana Scully and Fox Mulder discover that the military operations controlled and directed by the "inner government" are just as alive!

It's one of the most astonishing X-FILES adventures yet, with Scully and Mulder trapped in "the Silent City," a legendary ancient Aztec city in Alaska, caught in a crossfire between their own military and cultists who believe in a hollow Earth, and ultimately in possession of an incredible artifact that, according to the leader of the cultists, has the power to unlock the secrets of the future!

The X-Files #10
FEELINGS OF UNREALITY Part 1 (of 3)

Writer: Stefan Petrucha
Artist: Charles Adlard
Cover Artist: Miran Kim

"Wheels Within Wheels"
A stunning 3-part conclusion or year one!

Is Mulder losing his mind? That's what seems to be happening! Scully fears that her partner has become obsessed with the helmet he found in the Silent City. Are his claims that it has the power to see into the future grounded in truth or in a paranoid delusion? As Mulder becomes more and more obsessed and irrational, Scully begins her own, secret investigation. In her efforts to discover the truth Scully discovers clues that link the inner government conspiracy to the events surrounding the theft of the Fatima prophecy and the Roswell cover-up. But as she gets closer and closer to the truth, Scully discovers that she can't trust no one--not even her chief witness, Colleen Dunne, who was a major player in the Nesbit incident!

The X-Files #11
FEELINGS OF UNREALITY Part 2 (of 3)
"The Ancient of Days"

Writer: Stefan Petrucha
Artist: Charles Adlard
Cover Artist: Miran Kim

Scully's efforts to save an increasingly irrational Mulder are dangerously jeopardized by the person she thought was her ally, Colleen Dunne! What she discovers, too late, is the fact that Colleen has duped Scully and is using her. Not only that, but Colleen has succeeded in somehow placing Mulder under her mental control! Finally, Colleen succeeds in having Mulder bring her the helmet which supposedly allows the wearer to see into the future. Scully discovers the truth about Colleen, and reaches her just when Colleen dons the helmet. That's when things really start getting weird

The X-Files Annual #1
"Hallow Eve"

Writer: Stefan Petrucha
Artist: Charles Adlard
Cover Artist: Miran Kim

FBI Special Agents Fox Mulder and Dana Scully open the most tragic X-file of their career. What they discover is a case fraught with obsession, revenge, and terror and whose origins appear linked to the dawn of time

Some geneticists believe all mankind can be traced back to a single female hominid, nicknamed "Eve." Professor Jonah Bookford has dedicated his life to finding "Eve's" remains. Shortly after he claims to have made his spectacular discovery, he dies under mysterious circumstances--as do the earplane pilot and the truck driver who were hired to bring the bones of "Eve" to the United States.

Was it the ghost of "Eve" exacting revenge on the people who disturbed her grave? When other people begin to die, and more appear threatened, Scully and Mulder uncover a tragic secret about the man who found "Eve's" bones. As their investigation continues, Mulder becomes convinced the only way to discover the truth is to hire a medium, astonishingly, even skeptical Scully agrees! A medium is hired, a seance is conducted and the spirit of "Eve" is summoned. What Mulder and Scully discover next is the astounding truth about Eve

The X-Files Comics
Digest #1

Premiering an all-new format for The X-Files! This 96-page, digest (similar to Disney Adventures) features bi-monthly tales of mystery and intrigue featuring everyone's favorite FBI special agents, Fox Mulder and Dana Scully

"Big Foot, Warm Heart"

Writer: Stefan Petrucha
Artist: Charles Adlard
Cover Artist: Miran Kim

FBI special agents Dana Scully and Fox Mulder are assigned to follow up on a series of mysterious man-beast sightings near Seattle, Washington. Mulder discovers that the sightings stop abruptly near a huge privately owned compound. As their investigation continues, Scully and Mulder encounter the last of the big time game hunters. Local rumors claim he likes to release rare and dangerous beasts on his grounds, then hunt them down. From the evidence they gather, Scully and Mulder believe the hunter has trapped a Big Foot and plans to use it for prey. When Scully and Mulder sneak into the compound, they discover that now they, too, are being hunted

Trading Cards
The X-Files: Season One

From Topps, the publishers of the runaway hit X-Files comic

Murder. Mystery. Horror. Science Fiction. The award winning Fox series, created by Chris Carter, that lives between the genres comes to you in a spellbinding premium trading card series

With X-Files already featured on such prominent magazine covers as TV Guide and Entertainment Weekly, the only thing hotter than summer this year will be the X-Files trading card series! And, a marketing blitz that will accompany the shows season opener in the early fall guarantees continued mass exposure

"The X-Files is as 'out there' as TV gets, and that can be an exhilarating and terrifying place to be. The cult is catching on, could this FBI-meets-the-otherworldly suspense series be the next Star Trek?" - USA Today

Move over Trekkers, make way for the X-philes! With such critical and financial success from the TV show and comic book, this is be the most awaited trading card series of the year. A guaranteed hot seller, X-Files cards will bring new customers into your shops. If you under- ordered the X-Files Comic Book, don't make the same mistake twice! Make sure you stock enough to meet demand!

The 72 super premium trading cards will feature episodic photos from the first season of the TV show -- including special effects, creatures, aliens para- normal activity and behind the scenes info. Each card features photography and/or art on front and back!

Plus 24 cards feature original, newly-painted artwork from two of the top rising talents in the fantasy art business: Thom Ang and Cliff Nielsen. Each X-Files "New Vision" captures the defining moment of all 24 first season episodes.

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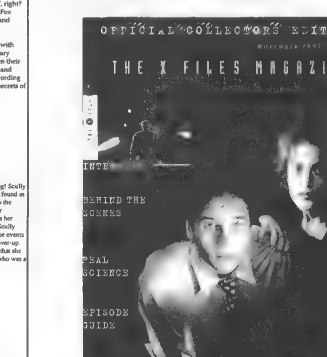

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"The film version of DETECTIVES, INC. ended up running two hours and ten minutes."

DON McGREGOR

We can't go on meeting this way, you know.

In our first three installments of the Don McGregor interview, Don told us just a whole big bunch of things about his work at Topps, Warren and Marvel, and a little about his work at Eclipse. Now we're going to round out the package with the wrap-up, covering the rest of his Eclipse career (DETECTIVES, INC. and RAGAMUFFINS), his Fictioneer books, his later career at Warren, Marvel and DC, and whatever else we can squeeze in before the tape runs out.

Here we go!

LOU MOUGIN: *Okay, Don, we're ready for the final session, the wrap-up. I bet that's the best news you've heard all week. I wanted to talk some about DETECTIVES, INC. this round. You did finally get it in print to a mass audience, many years after that first fanzine edition around 1970, in two versions from Eclipse, the first with Marshall Rogers and the second with Gene Colan. I know you've given us a lot of the details in The VARIABLE SYNDROME, but just for the people out there, can you tell us how it was to come back to your original comics project, and something about the video movie you're doing of it now?*

VITAL STATISTICS

Name: Don McGregor
Born: 15 June 1945 — Providence, Rhode Island
Favorite comic I've written: RAGAMUFFINS; NATHANIEL DUSK II: Apple Peddlers Die at Noon; DETECTIVES, INC.: A Remembrance of Threatening Green; the KILLRAVEN graphic novel; SABRE #7; SABRE: The Decadence Indoctrination; ALEXANDER RISK: The Hounds of Hell Theory; KILLRAVEN: The Morning After Mourning Prey. I'm too involved in the thick of creating Zorro and Lady Rawhide stories to have any objective opinion about them at this point in time. I'm with them daily, worrying about those books, hoping I've made them the best books I can. I love the characters
Favorite movies: SHANE, NORTH BY NORTHWEST, SHERLOCK JR. by **Buster Keaton** (for what it says about the nature of film and reality, and he did it in 1923 — the man was miraculous). I'm picking one **Keaton,** but catch me next week and I might say SEVEN CHANCES or STEAMBOAT BILL, JR. (And we never even talked about the **Buster Keaton** magazine I wrote and edited). GOLDFINGER, ROBIN AND MARIAN, BAR 20 JUSTICE (there has to be a Hopalong **Cassidy/William Boyd, Russell Hendon** and **Gabby Hayes** film in there).

DON McGREGOR: Okay. When I first came up with the idea of doing the two lead characters in DETECTIVES, INC., it wasn't actually for comics. It was for film. Although they kind of cross-over there. But the original thing I did with **Alex Simmons,** when I wrote the book, he drew it, and we took it down to the comics convention in 1970, Alex and I were making our own home movies at that time. So part of doing Denning and Rainier were characters for he and I to play. I'd actually done a screenplay for us to use in the movie. So I don't remember if I did the comic book first, or the movie. But both comic and movie script were written in the same time frame.

So I intended to do things in cinematic terms with DETECTIVES, INC. When I finally had a chance to do those characters in comic form, I couldn't have asked for a better artist than **Marshall Rogers** in terms of being cinematically representative. His sense of design and pacing is just amazing. Marshall did so many amazing things that I would never even have asked of him as an artist.

For instance, there's a sequence where Rainier is being hired by his ex-wife, and they're both having flashbacks to different things they remember from when they were married. And in the original script, I had Rainier having one flashback, and

McGREGOR

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"The BLACK PANTHER movie — a street

then on another page, his wife having a flashback, and then there's one point where they share a memory. The conversation sparks the same memory in both. Well, Marshall took those flashbacks and had them going simultaneously. *(Laughter.)* And pulled it off!

There's another sequence where Rainier's out on a deserted beach, speaking to Ruth Hamilton. She's a lesbian who has survived the murder of her lover. They're walking out in this seascape. In that sequence, what I wanted is that while Ruth is speaking, Rainier's having all of these fantasies. And at one point, 'cause it's seldom you ever see this kind of thing in comics, Ruth turns around to him and says, "You haven't heard a word I've said!" And, of course, he hasn't. But Marshall stretched this across three pages — I think I had it going across two — where they walk right up into the fantasy, like, and interrupt it. And it was just beautifully executed. So I was really thrilled with that.

One of the things we should talk about, I guess, is that when the chance came to do the film version of DETECTIVES, INC., I'd been looking around and wanted to do this, I thought that with the advent of video that there must be some way that I can do a film version of these characters.

ONCE, ONE SUMMER DAY, LIKE DEAR, I WAS BACK WHEN WE WERE STILL US.
REMEMBER US? WE WEREN'T PART OF ANY DAMN SOCIAL STATISTICS. WE WERE BEYOND THE CLIMATES OF OUR TIMES
THE PRESSURES OF THE WORLD, THE CONFLICTS OF OTHER COUPLES? HELL NO! COULDN'T TOUCH US
GOD, WERE WE ARROGANT
THIS IS DIFFICULT FOR YOU, DO, ROBERT, BUT THIS ISN'T THE TIME OR THE
I LOOK AT YOU, RITA, AND TRY TO
EVEN NOW, WITH ALL THE BITTER AND WOUNDING DAYS BEHIND US
TO UNDERSTAND WHAT WAS REALLY HAPPENING TO US BACK THEN
ALL DAY I'VE BEEN AFRAID OF HOW I'D REACT DURING THIS DINNER. THAT I'D SIT HERE TALKING (NAMELY)
AND SEE IF YOU STILL FEEL THE SAME AS GOD KNOWS, I KNOW THE PRICE
AND ALL THE TIME WANT TO REACH UP YOUR DRESS--
YOU THOUGHT I COULD PAY IT, I GUESS HELL, I MIGHT AS WELL BE SAIL. I GUESS I THOUGHT I COULD PAY THE PRICE ALSO
BUT NOW, STRANGELY ENOUGH, THOUGH I FEAR THE REACTION ALL DAY--
I DON'T FEEL THE DESIRE AT ALL
ALL I FEEL IS A SENSE OF BEING LOST
AND NOT KNOWING HOW TO GET BACK--
BECAUSE I'M STRANGLING HERE! I'M MORE THAN A GODDAMNED HOUSEWIFE!
WHO GAVES ANGIE THAT RIGHT TO FIND ME?
TO ANYCALE A HOOK
SEEMS TO ME I'VE READ THOSE LINES BEFORE. YOU'RE GOT ALL THE QUOTES DOWN PAT, RITA--
--AND YOU'RE MADE US ONE DIMENSIONAL!

Samples of concurrent memory sequence as illustrated by Marshall Rogers in DETECTIVES, INC.

But I really hadn't explored all the possibilities. When I would meet people, every once in a while that topic would come up, I'd mention it and such. I was still thinking, there's got to be a way for me to do this.

When **Ed Via** gave me a call and expressed an interest in it, and it became a reality that we were going to do this thing, I was already in the process of putting together a new Detectives, Inc. project for Eclipse. Now, this was in the mid-'80s, and I had intended to do a story about the bombing of abortion clinics.

LOU: *Oh, yeah. About a-number of years before the recent shooting of a couple of abortion doctors.*

DON: Right. So, the whole deal was that when the opportunity to do the film presented itself because of Ed, I knew I wasn't going to be able to blow up buildings. There was no way I was going to be able to pull that off. So I had to come up with another story idea.

I was questing about, knowing I couldn't do something about abortion clinics. I was watching some program late at night, and they had a thing on domestic abuse. And this is obviously big in the news right now, with the **O.J. Simpson** case all over the media.

LOU: *Unfortunately so. And it will still be going on, even after the big news is over.*

DON: Right. So I saw the program discussing it — I was channel-surfing at the time. And I said, "What the hell is this?" And I started hearing some of these statistics, and I couldn't believe what I was hearing. So I started to take down information, and I said, "This sounds like something that we might be able to do in film." So when we got together, many people thought that I was out of my mind. *(Laughter.)* They said, "Don, you're crazy. You're gonna undertake this as a film thing?" And at the time, I didn't really have any idea of how long it was going to be. I think it was going to be something like a half-hour, an hour, I didn't know. I didn't even have a story in mind yet, so I didn't have it totally locked in or anything. Of course, it's all edited now, and it ended up running two hours and ten minutes.

So it was a big ambitious thing to undertake. *(Laughter.)* And a lot of people said, "Don, you're out of your mind, you're crazy, don't do this thing." *(Laughter.)* I thank Ed from the bottom of my heart, because he was always supportive and always there. I told people, "Look, if you wanna do a documentary about people washing windows on sky-

sweeper who doesn't take baths. *(Laughter.)"*

scrapers, I think that's great and fine. That's not what I want to do. I'm a storyteller, and I want to tell stories with these characters. I don't believe I can do that in ten minutes."

I also knew that if you're a writer in comics, if you want to have any kind of control over the characters at all, you can't just go in with the comic books. They have no respect for writers of comics. Therefore, it meant that I was gonna have to do a movie script. And if you also direct it, then you would have some degree of control about getting those characters on screen close to what people loved in the comics. Other than that, you're going to end up with something like the BLACK PANTHER movie script, where he's turned from the kind of character he is in the comic books into a guy who's a street sweeper who doesn't take baths. *(Laughter.)* I'm not exaggerating. That's one of the versions that really exists in one of the Hollywood treatments for the BLACK PANTHER film.

LOU: *We will not ask you who did that screenplay.* (Laughter.) *And people wonder why Marvel has a hard time making it in the movies!*

DON: Around the time that project was being pitched, I was contacted by some people at A&M Records who were interested in doing a PANTHER film, and they asked me who I thought would make a good Panther. I said, **"Denzel Washington,** and if you could get **Sidney Poitier** to play his father, it would be perfect!" One can dream! Anyhow, I wanted to be able to protect myself against that! The only way I could do it is if I went out and wrote and directed it.

LOU: *Do you have a buyer or distributor for it yet?*

DON: Ed is going to be taking care of that once he gets with his agents and everything. We still have to put music to it, but all the sound effects are done. It was a very ambitious, nutsy, wonderful project.

Let me tell you a couple of things. First, when we had all the actors come in and they did a script reading and we did the casting and everything, many of the actors and actresses were asking, "How could you write a movie script the first time out like that? You write comic books! How could you do the screenplay?" Well, a screenplay's a hell of a lot easier to do than comic-book scripts. *(Laughter.)*

LOU: *So I've heard.*

DON: Because in comic book scripts, there are so many mechanical things that you have to keep in mind. For instance, in a comic, let's say you have a dialogue scene. In a film, you don't have to think about too much more, because the actors are going to be bringing it to life. But if you're doing a comic, you have to think: "What am I going to tell the artist to draw while these people are talking? What is the stage play?" Now, it can be every bit as dramatic as any action scene in the world, but still and all, what are you going to tell the artist to draw to keep that page vibrant and alive and integral in and of itself?

Dwayne Turner pencil artwork from selected panels of "Panther's Prey" by McGregor.

LOU: *Yeah, I know. It's hard for a conversation scene in a comic not to degenerate into talking heads.*

DON: Exactly. Let's take a sequence in "Panther's Prey" where Monica Lynne and the Black Panther get together. In

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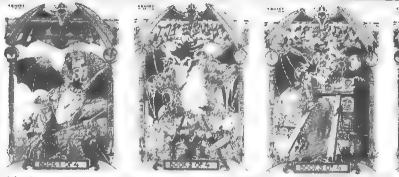

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"To me, doing comics is harder than doing prose."

essence, I had that dialogue worked out long before I ever got around to writing that sequence. That's fourteen pages of a man and a woman standing around talking about whether or not they should go to bed together. *(Laughter.)* Remind me to tell you a funny story about that later on — it's surrealistic.

But there's a lot of considerations. What am I gonna tell **Dwayne Turner** to draw in doing that sequence? And how do I keep Monica the Panther's visual equal throughout that whole scene? So those things you always have to be considering. When you're doing a film and you come up with dialogue — if, for instance, the scene is running long — you can cut it. "Let's see, I can cut this here, I can cut that there, I can do this." There's a lot of manipulation you can do with the sequence.

In comics you don't have that option. Once this has been drawn, man, they are using it. You have a finite number of pages, and if you say, "Fourteen pages are gonna be these people standing this room . . ."

LOU: *Yeah. They go, "Huh?"*

DON: *(Laughter.)* Yeah, exactly. So these are things you always have to be thinking about in comics.

Now, on the other side, what's harder about film is that, to pull everything off once you've written it requires the capabilities of so many different people in so many areas. When we first started working on this, we had a lot of action sequences. We had fight sequences, people being slashed with straight-edged razors, guns going off, bullets hitting things. So we had to think about how we were going to do all these things, and you have to find people who can do them and pull them off effectively and not get anybody hurt.

One of the other differences is that, rather than telling an artist to draw something, if the artist can capture the image and bring that vibrancy that you want to a scene, in movies human beings have to pull this off. If it's an action sequence, for instance, you have to be very careful. You're talking about flesh and bone here. Somebody could actually get hurt. If it's a sexual scene, you have to be really taking into account what human beings are going through. Because acting is a very unnatural thing in a certain sense, in that you have people pretending to be something that they aren't. And oftentimes they're in intimate situations, when maybe they've just met for the first time that day. And they have to be thrown immediately into a situation of intimacy. It can get very harrowing very, very quickly.

Going back to that question that the actors and actresses had asked, I said, "That's because you think comics are something second-rate." To me, doing comics is harder than doing prose, because if you're doing straight prose, you can always control what you want the audience to see. It's all dependent upon you. If it's a comic, and you're doing a sequence in which you want to have a certain effect, you'd better have a partner who's able to pull it off for you.

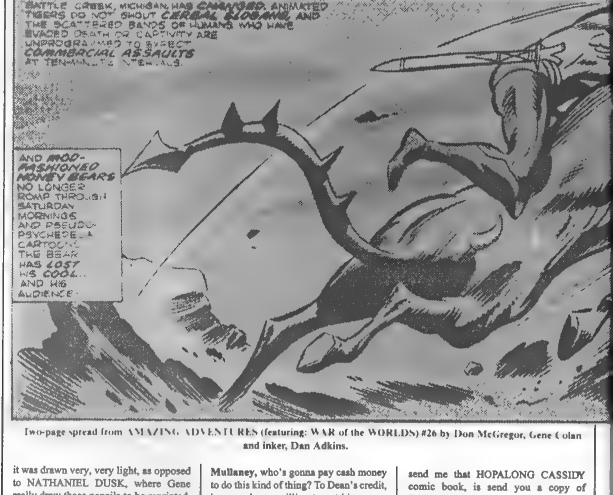
LOU: *Exactly.*

DON: I don't know if I've said this yet in the other interviews I've done with you, but I have been very, very fortunate in my career to work with very talented people who brought their own talent and zest and imagination to these projects. People like **Craig Russell,** I know we've talked about **Marshall Rogers,** and I cannot overlook **Gene Colan.** When I describe to Gene a character which is inside my head, it's like Gene is right here inside my head. When we originally did the book NATHANIEL DUSK for DC Comics, Gene did some character sketches of all the major cast. I'm not going to name the inker. They had somebody ink up those sample pages. It was a very good inker, but they totally lost what I thought NATHANIEL DUSK should be. Whereas, in Gene's pencils, it was there.

So I really went and lobbied to print Gene's pencils. I had talked to **Dean Mullaney** at Eclipse, because we had done RAGAMUFFINS by printing from pencils. RAGAMUFFINS was not originally drawn to be printed from pencils, so

"You'd better have a partner who's able to pull it off." Rich Buckler art for Morbius from VAMPIRE TALES #3.

"One of the hardest things to do in comics is


BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN, HAS CHANGED. ANIMATED TIGERS DO NOT SHOUT CHEERIO, KLOSARS, AND THE SCATTERED BANDS OF HUMANS WHO HAVE EVADED DEATH OR CAPTIVITY ARE UNPROGRAMMED TO RESPECT COMMERCIAL ASSAULTS
AND MOD-FASHIONED HONEY BEARS NO LONGER ROAM THROUGH SATURDAY MORNINGS AND PSEUDO-PSYCHEDELIA CARTOONS. THE BEAR HAS LOST HIS COOL... AND HIS AUDIENCE.

Two-page spread from AMAZING ADVENTURES (featuring: WAR of the WORLDS) #26 by Don McGregor, Gene Colan and inker, Dan Adkins.

it was drawn very, very light, as opposed to NATHANIEL DUSK, where Gene really drew those pencils to be reprinted. Dean had found the process whereby we could take a book like that, and print color with pencils. I don't know if it was the first time it was ever done, but it was certainly one of the first times. They had to experiment a bit with it to get it right. But they had it right.

So Dean said, "Tell DC to give me a call, and I'll tell them what we did and everything." They wouldn't call, because Eclipse was a smaller company, and they didn't think they needed the advice of some little mickey-mouse company out in California. *(Laughter.)* Of course, they didn't get the reproduction anywhere near as good as it should have been. I wish people could see the original artwork on that book.

Especially when one of my all-time favorite books is the RAGAMUFFINS book, because that's a book that shouldn't exist in this business, anybody who works in this business knows that it would be almost impossible. Except for **Dean Mullaney**, who's gonna pay cash money to do this kind of thing? To Dean's credit, he was always willing to put his money where his mouth was, and print books that no one else in this business would do. And that may include going up to today.

LOU: *Was RAGAMUFFINS kind of like a project that "just growed?"*

DON: No. RAGAMUFFINS was a project I always wanted to do. I wish people could — there's one story that hasn't seen print yet, called "The Pack Rat Instinct." and it's all about collecting. So, if you're a comics collector, believe me, there won't be a dry eye in the house come the last page of that book. *(Laughter.)* I almost had to kill **Charlie Nevinskie**, though, because he was looking at it the other day and looked at the last page first. But there is some possibility that that RAGAMUFFINS story may appear in one of the Topps books.

LOU: *Well, I hope you'll save us a copy of one of the pages so we can reproduce it with this interview.*

DON: Well, one of the things I'm gonna do for you, because you were very kind to send me that HOPALONG CASSIDY comic book, is send you a copy of ZORRO #3.

LOU: *Oh, my golly!*

DON: It's going for twenty-five bucks a shot now, Lou! I've got a few extras, and I'm gonna send one to you!

LOU: *Oh, my golly. Is this guy not a beautiful person, or what?*

DON: Well, thank you.

LOU: *We'll keep this in the transcript for sure, guys.* (Tremendous laughter from both.)

Well, the RAGAMUFFINS thing made me think of the slice-of-life stories you and Billy Graham, or you and Tom Sutton, would do for ECLIPSE MAGAZINE. I'm talking about the one about going down to the nightclub in Harlem (Don laughs) — yeah, that was fun. I liked that. "The little blond-haired dude!" And the Tom Sutton one, about the graveyard dirt. That reminded me of that old Bill Cosby routine, about him and Old Weird Harold going to the monster movie late at night, then having to go home and being scared by a wino

action scenes. What can we bring that's new?"

--BOTH OBLITERATED BY THE MARTIAN INVADERS WHO HAVE SEIZED TERRA FOR THEIR OWN DESIGNS.
KILLRAVEN SINGS TO THE CREATURE-- AND IF HE HEARS THE FOREBODING CRIES OF THOSE PHANTOMS IT IS ONLY FOR AN INSTANT...AND NOTHING MORE!

and having to run sixty miles an hour back home! (Laughter.)

DON: That graveyard story, by the way, is based upon a real incident. *(Laughter.)* So's "The Little Blond-Headed Kid!" *(Laughter.)*

LOU: *Nobody'd believe you made these up, man!*

DON: See, the great thing about ECLIPSE MAGAZINE was that you could do these little slice-of-life stories in it, which was great in itself. I love doing genre material. I don't find anything second-rate about it at all. But genre material has other demands, and it's great to not have to deal with those demands all the time.

One of the hardest things to do in comics — and we're getting way off the film, and I want to get back to it — but one of the hardest things to do in comics is action scenes. Why? Because we have so many damn hundreds of them being done every damn month! What can we bring to it that's new? That the reader hasn't seen over and over again?

LOU: *I know, I know.*

DON: You're always there dealing with that. What can you do to get something going with that that's intriguing and interesting and exciting, and at the same time you're not overlooking the character's humanity?

LOU: *It's like if you're playing rock 'n roll and having to do the same three chords, how do we make these three chords sound interesting to these guys when they've heard the same thing jillions of times?*

DON: Yeah.

LOU: *That's the thing. It would seem to be the easiest thing to do but the hardest thing in the world to do right.*

DON: Yeah, I find those scenes especially tough.

LOU: *Yeah. But if you want to go back to the film, go back to it.*

DON: One of the correlations I wanted to make between doing the film and doing comics and everything: The first day we were going to shoot, after things had been in pre-production for some time, well, doing a film is not unlike going to war. This analogy has been made before, and it truly is such. You gotta get a whole bunch of people to a certain place, and they have to achieve an objective. The first day that we went on location, there were a still a lot of skeptics who thought, "Wow, *(Laughter.)* Don's really gonna do this thing! He's crazy, he's out of his mind! We haven't been able to talk him out of it!"

And fortunately, as I've said, **Ed Via** was always supportive. So the first day, we were down there filming in somebody's house. And the thing about movies which is the worst part is that you always have to be getting up at 3 or 4 in the morning. Because you always have to be where you're going to be by first light. And you've gotta be ready to shoot whenever that first light comes up. So, yeah, getting up at 3:00 in the morning, especially if you've been shooting last night till 1:00 in the morning *(Laughter)*, is not the easiest thing for me to do in the world! Once I'm up and going, it's fine.

People have always said to me, "Well, Don, directing must be the hardest thing in the world to do!" No. Writing is the hardest thing in the world to do. Because writing is just a blank sheet of paper in front of you. And there's nothing. There's no characters. There's no story. There's no theme. There's nothing. And you've gotta sit there, and you have to know it all, you have to come up with all of it. The thing with directing is that, once you're there, whatever the problems are going to

"Writing is the hardest thing in the world to do.

be, people are continually coming to you for answers, and you say, "Okay, what're my options?" And people say, "Well, okay, you an do this or this or that." Because you know that things have gotta get going. You have fifty people waiting for you, you can't stand around saying, "We're not going to do anything."

LOU: *Right. Exactly.*

DON: We went out to shoot on location all over New York. We shot in Brooklyn, we shot at Coney Island, we shot on the Boardwalk, we shot on the streets of Manhattan, we shot up in Queens. We were filming a sequence up at Dobb's Ferry. I had wanted to film up there, I had found a restaurant that looked really, really great. It had a fantastic view all the way down the Hudson River. You could see all the way down to the George Washington Bridge. So I really wanted to use it, because it would visually open things up. Because a lot of scenes I had to film indoors, in fairly tight places, and I thought this was going to give me a visual counterpoint that would really be effective in those big banquet scenes.

So I had to have extras and everything. And getting everything together, to get everybody up to this place where we were meeting at 4:00 in the morning in the city, we had vans and cars all traveling to this one destination, to get up to this restaurant to film. And I'd gone up there to get permission to film sometime in October. And this is one of the good things about having your picture in comic books: when you go up to talk to people about these things, you bring the books with you and you can say, "This is me." And if they see it in the books, it's much more immediate than if you had just identification in your wallet to show them. They can say, "Well, this really is the person." They can take a look at the product that you've put out. And I think that a book like NATHANIEL DUSK or RAGAMUFFINS, like that, have a look of quality about them. They can appreciate the effort that was put into those books.

LOU: *The have a look of professionalism, right?*

DON: So, we got permission to film there. We got up to the restaurant. The great thing was that they had this great outside dining area, with all these tables, and a gazebo and everything. So we pull up about 5:00 in the morning. The first thing that happened was people running up to me and saying, "Don, they got all their Christmas decorations up!" (Laughter.) There's Santa Clauses and reindeer and bells and everything, all over the place. And I'm sitting there, saying, "It's

all gotta come off. I can't date when this is happening. So all the Christmas stuff has gotta come down. But I don't want to cause these people any problems. I want everything going back exactly where it was." *(Laughter.)* "We've gotta take pictures of everything, but get it on out of there, we can't have it."

The next thing they said was, "Don, we have no electricity." *(Laughter.)* "We're gonna have to run off of batteries. They shut off all the electricity. That means we've only got two hours you can play with in terms of shooting, because that's all we've got in our batteries before they run down."

LOU: *Oh, great!*

DON: So I'm going, "Oh, man! Jeez!" All these things are coming at you. Meantime, I'm trying to block out where I'm going to have the cameras in the first shot and everything. And the owner of the restaurant comes up. So I run up to him and say, "Please, could you just put the electricity back on so I'll have power for the cameras and everything?" The man is very, very nice, and says, "Fine. And, Don, if you want to stay down over here to the side, because the police up here like to charge you if anybody comes down here to film anything. If you're down over there, they won't see you and charge you."

So I ran over and said, "Hey, I've got electricity! We're all set to go. Plug your camera in, and we can get going." They said, "You've got another problem. Put your hand out." And it's starting to sprinkle. *(Laughter.)* "You know, this equipment won't take rain. So ask him if you can film inside."

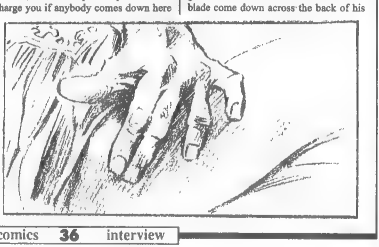
They had a ballroom with a glass front, but, you know, I hadn't traveled all that way out there to film inside. *(Laughter.)* Besides which, even though we'd brought all our lights and everything, I didn't have enough lights to light up all of that ballroom. But the other option was to stand around, keep everything under wraps until we saw whether it would rain or pass over. A decision had to be made. So I said, "Take it indoors. We're gonna film." We asked the owner if we could film indoors, and that's what we did.

But it's just one thing after another. You constantly are hit with choices, and they have to be made immediately. Whereas when you're writing, there's no clear direction as to where you should go. Until you start understanding those characters and the story, and what it should be about and what you're giving to the audience.

LOU: *Also, the one thing that I was flashing on is that you can have Gene Colan or Marshall Rogers draw fifty zillion people in one page. But if you try that in a film, you're going to have to pay every one of those fifty zillion people.*

DON: No, we didn't have that kind of money. We had a lot of people doing stuff because they're in love with doing this kind of thing.

I worked with a special effects guy named Eric Goto, and Eric was incredible. I said, "Well, Eric, there's a scene here where Rainier comes in, he's got a gun in his hand. I want to see the razor blade come down across the back of his



There's no characters, no story, no theme, nothing."

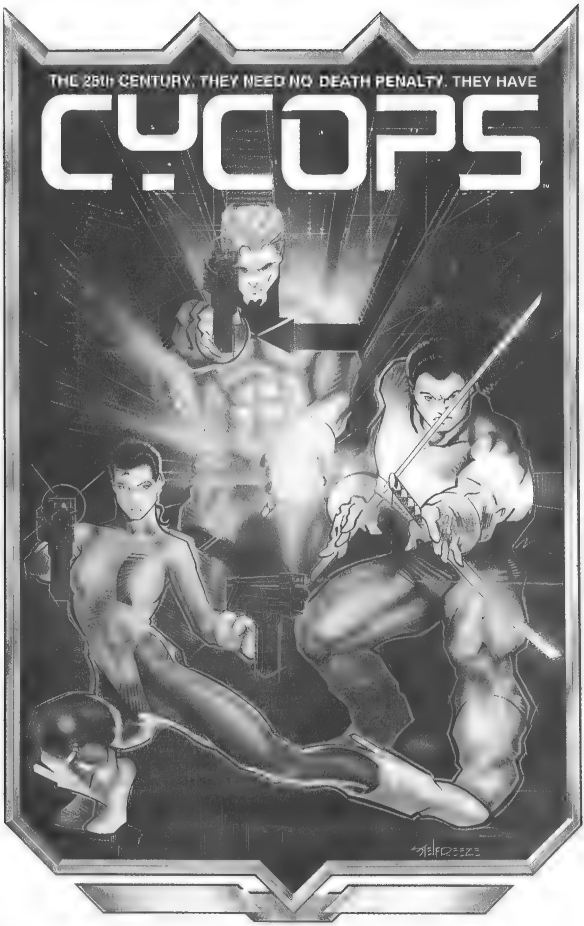
I WANTED TO LOOK THE OTHER WAY..
...NEVER SEE THESE UNFORTUNATE CHILDREN, WHO FROM BIRTH WERE NEVER GIVEN AN EQUAL CHANCE.
I LOOK INTO THEIR EYES AS I DO YOU AND I FIND FEAR, YOU WILL FIND LOVE.
UHH!
A HOSPITAL
AHHHH
YOU PRIVATE EYES AREN'T ALL TALK, ARE YOU?
NO, THEY ARE OUR FUTURE.
WE'RE NOT PRIVATE EYES. I HAVE TO KEEP TELLING YOU AND MY POP WE'RE INVESTIGATORS.
WE NEED YOUR DONATIONS..!
...TO HELP CONQUER..
UHH... HELLOO!
...THE KILLERS OF OUR CHILDREN.
DID YOU F... WHERE YOU... NEED A RE...
NO. THAT T... IS...
THE GUY WHO BEAT HIS WI... RIGHT NOW.

This spread: Gene Colan pencil art from the comic-book adaptation of the DETECTIVES, INC. film, "A Terror of Dying Dreams."

hand. We see the razor blade come down, and we see it cut open his hand, blood flies out and he drops the gun. This has all got to happen on camera. How can we do that and make sure it's safe?"

And Eric would always just go, "Ace. Gimme about a week to work on that. I'll get back to you." And he would come up with something that just looked amazing on film. He was a pleasure to work with.

We were doing a sequence in which my wife, Marsha, who plays Dierdre Sevens, gets her back gashed open at one point. So we bought some extra blouses and everything, and had the straight-edged razor. Eric had designed some contraption in which she had metal armor for her back, fake flesh over it, blood in between it, and fake flesh over that, so that you could cut it open. We were using a real straight-edged razor. So at one point, Eric said to me, "I want you to understand the situation with the straight-edge, Don." And I said, "Well, I wrote the situation with the


THE 25th CENTURY. THEY NEED NO DEATH PENALTY. THEY HAVE
CYCOPS

"We were using a real straight-edged razor."

straight-edged razor. I know they're dangerous." He said, "Yeah, but I really want you to understand this thing. So you take this straight-edged razor, and here's this roll of Bounty towels, and I just want you to drop your hand. Don't use any force, just drop your hand." Cleaved right through it.

LOU: *Yeah.*

DON: I said, "I now understand the situation." *(Laughter.)* "I got you, Eric, I understand." Because Marsha's arm was not protected. So I had to make sure that whenever I used that razor coming down, that I pulled my hand back very quickly.

LOU: *So you're going to be a bad guy in this one?*

DON: I'm not even in it. My hand is in it. This is tricks in movie making. The insert shot where the slash happens is so tight that, even if you slowed it down, you can't tell.

LOU: *I thought you might do a bit in there like Roman Polanski doing a cameo as the knife-wielding hood in Chinatown.*

DON: No. In fact, some people wanted me to do a walk-on. I could have played Rainier. But there's only one reason I didn't wanna do it. I didn't want to have to memorize all those lines that cockamamie writer wrote. *(Laughter.)* Jeez! I'd a wanted to improvise, which would've driven the director nuts! *(Laughter.)* "You want me to memorize what?? I don't think so!"

LOU: *Yeah, let him drive you nuts.*

DON: There's one story I want to tell you about that. The first day of filming, though, with everybody telling me how crazy this was going to be, we were downstairs filming all day long. You

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"You know that Monica Lynne was in [illegible] book

normally film everything from one side of the room, every angle through out the entire scene, and when you're going to radically change the angle you'd better make sure that you've filmed everything from that angle or position, because it's a lot of work to change everything over, and do all the technical work that has to be done.

So we'd been filming since about 5:00 in the morning. **Alex Simmons** couldn't join us, but Alex was supposed to be joining us later in the day. And I was telling his wife, Loran, "When Alex shows up, no matter what happens, no matter what's coming at me, tell me Alex is here. And I'm gonna turn around and say, 'Hey, Alex, how ya doing?' And I'm gonna have this big smile on my face just like I'm raring to go. So whenever he comes, just say, 'Alex is here,' and I'm gonna be laughing." It's gonna be great, and he's gonna say, "Wow, I can't believe Don is taking this so well."

So about 4 or 5:00 in the afternoon, we were changing positions extremely, filming exactly opposite of what we had been filming earlier. So it's going to take a while to set up. And the people whose home we were filming in had a VCR upstairs, so I decided to take some of the stuff up and take a look at it and see how it looked. We had a system where we had the earphones on, monitoring the sound, and the sound levels indicating and everything. And I got upstairs, and start to look at what we've got. The pictures are fine. There's no sound at all. None! Nada!

LOU: *None?! Good grief!*

DON: I can't believe this! I rewind the tape back. I had nothing! I rewind further back. Nothing! There's no sound! I couldn't figure out how this could possibly have happened. I've been assured a hundred times, ten ways from Sunday, you asked the people who are hearing it in their earphones, they're watching the V monitors and we're not peaking, everything was fine. I can't believe it! There is no sound. It's like somebody has just kicked me in the stomach. All the air has gone out of me. It's like all those people saying, "Don, you're crazy to be doing this!" suddenly I could hear their voices, and they're right! They must've been right! God, I had to be out of my head! *What was I thinking!*

And I was like, gasping up there. But I'm the only one now that knows. Everybody down below, all the performers who have put all this work and effort in there, all the technical people who have been putting in all this work, none of them know yet that everything we shot is no good and we have to start from square one.

And that's when Alex calls. And I can hardly speak, I'm going, *(gasping voice)* "Alex . . . Alex . . ." And I can hardly get the words out, and you can almost hear the tears in my voice. "I can't believe it!" He said, "What's the matter, Don?" I said, "Nothing! It doesn't . . . everything we . . . shot . . . is . . . it's no good! WE can't . . ." But, you know, I had to come down those stairs. I had to tell people, "Find out what's wrong. Nothing got on the tape. We have no sound. Take the stuff back, hook it up over there, get ready, take the first shot that we took at 5:00 this morning, get this over here." *(Laughter.)*

But the great thing was that about 2:00 in the morning, when we broke up shooting for that day — and it was just a minor misconnection they had in the wire that somebody had done there, it was registering everywhere, it just wasn't getting on the tape. But we got to where we were going, and went back to the house. And Ed said, "You did a great job directing today, Don." And it was like, it meant everything to me. Because there was that one point where I thought, "Ah, God!" This really is true. Even when I got down to the editing phase, it was a real challenge, there were a lot of things that had to be overcome.

So it was a fabulous thing to do. There was a lot of work, and there were a lot of times in which I thought, "Oh, god, how am I gonna get out of this!" But to have had that kind of opportunity, and to have the kind of support I had with Ed, I've been really fortunate.

And by the way, I was mentioning earlier having great artists to work with over the years, and I should have mentioned **Dwayne Turner** and **Mike Mayhew**. Because they've always given their best in their work. I don't give them easy scripts to do, and they've always done a good job on them. One of the best things about doing "Panther's Prey" with **Dwayne Turner**, for instance, was that we got to be really good friends.

And that's one of the sad things, sometimes, that you don't get to see people whom you really like as much as you'd like to. Because you end up going on to different projects, and it demands so much of your time and energy.

LOU: *Yeah. But I'm sure it balances out, because you get to meet new people whom you get to like. As I have found out.*

DON: True, true. A lot of times, I've said, "Oh, man, I wish I could get together with Dwayne." I just talked with

with no panties on, and it's gonna cost us sales."

him last week, and it was great to hear his voice again. Of course, **Gene Colan** and his wife, Adrienne — I'm always in touch with them. Gene is living quite a distance away, and I don't get see him in any way nearly as often as I'd like. He's just like my *compadre.*

LOU: *I've interviewed him, too. He's really a good egg.*

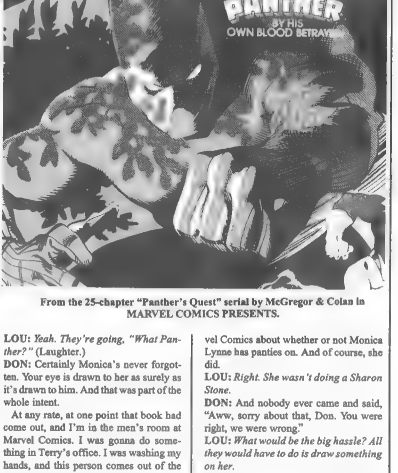
DON: Oh, man. He's just wonderful to work with. I have great **Gene Colan** stories to tell, if you have some time. The one thing I just wanted to mention is that, even though I've had problems over the years with some people who try to limit what can or can't appear in this medium, who acted capriciously, sometimes cruelly, I've really been very fortunate in later years to be in positive environments to work in. Working with an editor like **Terry Kavanaugh** — he's the reason that a series like "Panther's Quest," for instance managed to see print. I think Terry probably took a lot of heat for running a 25-chapter serial in MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS.

LOU: *Oh, yeah. I'm sure he did.* (Laughter.)

DON: And I had no idea how long that series was gonna run. I think I was up to about chapter ten or twelve, and Terry asked, "How many chapters do you think you're gonna need, Don?" I know they were really pressuring him. *(Laughter.)* But you know, Terry was behind the book 100%. And I just enjoyed his company so much. His intelligence, his ability, it was really such a good experience. The same thing when we did "Panther's Prey."

But you know, the powers that be, lots of times they know the things that will get to you. At Marvel Comics one time when we were talking about that Monica Lynne and Panther sequence, she's dressed in very revealing nightclothes, and I'd originally written the dialogue for that scene not knowing whether or not it'd be in maybe two or three separate scenes. It eventually ended up being in one sequence. If it was two or three, I was going to have T'Challa dressed up in more traditional clothes, rather than his Black Panther outfit. But when I knew it was going to run about 14 pages, I said, "I can't have him not dressed as the Black Panther. People want to see the Black Panther. So do I." Then I had to find a way to make it realistic and motivated for him to be dressed up as the Black Panther.

But I wanted to make it so that he wouldn't steal the show from Monica. Well, of course, having her dressed very provocatively balanced the two of them out throughout the scene.



From the 25-chapter "Panther's Quest" serial by McGregor & Colan in MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS.

LOU: *Yeah. They're going, "What Panther?"* (Laughter.)

DON: Certainly Monica's never forgotten. Your eye is drawn to her as surely as it's drawn to him. And that was part of the whole intent.

At any rate, at one point that book had come out, and I'm in the men's room at Marvel Comics. I was gonna do something in Terry's office. I was washing my hands, and this person comes out of the stall and says, "You know, you're gonna cost **Terry Kavanaugh** his job."

Now, I know this is their opening salvo. And it's a line with which they're going to catch my attention, because they know I would not do a thing in the world to hurt Terry. But I have no idea what in the hell this person can possibly be talking about. But he said, "You know that Monica Lynne was in that book with no panties on, and it's gonna cost us x-amount of copies in sales." And I'm going in my head, "Monica's without any panties? When?" *(Laughter.)* My memory's bad, but I think I would remember that. So I'm arguing that there is no possibility that this could have happened.

I'm trying to go over every panel in my head as this absurd conversation continues. I'm asking myself "Is there a possibility that I could have missed a panel?" I'm sure that I would have seen this, that I would have noticed. So now we're having this debate in the hallowed halls of Marvel Comics about whether or not Monica Lynne has panties on. And of course, she did.

LOU: *Right. She wasn't doing a Sharon Stone.*

DON: And nobody ever came and said, "Aww, sorry about that, Don. You were right, we were wrong."

LOU: *What would be the big hassle? All they would have to do is draw something on her.*

DON: *(Laughter.)* Well, it was already printed. But the thing was, I had already discussed "Panther's Prey" with the appropriate people at Marvel. Because that was right around the time that **Frank Miller** had come out with the ELEKTRA book for Marvel. And there's a sequence in there where I think there are corpses getting up off the slabs in a morgue. They're all naked, and there are swords through these naked people and everything. So I had said to the head people there, "Look, this sequence with the Black Panther and Monica Lynne, it's very sexual and erotic, but there's no violence. It's not like anybody is killing anybody. And if you guys can print this (in ELEKTRA), and not have a problem, then you should have no problem about anything here. I don't wanna hear about it." *(Laughter.)*

LOU: *But it's very weird, they always have a problem with sex. They never have a problem with violence. To me, it's*

"They changed it to say he wanted to kill Commies

Don's Warren series: hit and . . . MIST. (See text.)

exactly the opposite.

DON: A hundred percent with me, too. And Frank's book was already done. It wasn't like I was trying to get him in any trouble. That wasn't the point. My only thing was, "You guys can't be arbitrary this way, and suddenly give me a hard time over a scene that's very sexy, basically a positive thing between two people." Another unusual aspect about Terry is that he didn't typecast talent. When he was editing WHAT THE . . .?, Marvel's parody comic, he asked me to write the take-off on the Black Panther which I called "The Black 'n' Blue Panther," I had a lot of fun working on the project. Some people at Marvel, not knowing I'd written the story, actually apologized, feeling I'd been too mercilessly put down. Now, many editors wouldn't even have considered me to write a humor story, even though there is often an element of humor even in my most serious stories. But Terry wasn't locked in and could see the possibilities.

LOU: *Well, can I ask you about one of my favorite stories of yours?*

DON: Sure.

LOU: *It was one you did for Warren, when you returned during the Weezie Jones era. The John Lennon assassination story. "Remember All the People" (EERIE #123). Was this written just after you heard about his murder on the radio, or what?*

DON: I don't remember if it was written immediately afterward. It was something that I really felt, and that I really wanted to write about. That was the inspiration for that story, certainly: The murder of **John Lennon.**

LOU: *It wasn't really a horror story, so it was wild for it to be appearing in CREEPY or EERIE.*

DON: That's probably thanks to Louise. Again, Louise was somebody who was really good to work with.

LOU: *You were doing a lot of stuff for Warren around that time.*

DON: Well, yeah. *(Laughter.)* I have a good story to tell about that. When we were doing the Mist series. This has nothing to do with **Louise Jones.** Louise had already gone to work at Marvel. I don't remember who the actual editor was because they were changing editors there quite a bit, and some of the people's names I don't even remember. There were people who left after so much as three weeks.

But I was doing a series about a character called The Mist. You once asked me about inspirations for characters. The two CIA agents in the Mist series were definitely inspired by the characters from I SPY.

LOU: *Ah!*

DON: And if you look at the white CIA agent, his name is Hobie. The first character that **Robert Culp** ever played in a television series called TRACKDOWN was called Hobie Gilman. And the black CIA agent is named Noah. And of course, **Cosby's** first big comedy routine was "Noah."

LOU: *Right!*

DON: So this was my way of doing I SPY without being able to write I SPY. And there's a sequence in there where they end up having to spy on this innocent family. They're listening to all the sounds of the family, and their lovemaking, and the Hobie character is explaining why he became an agent. He always thought it was going to be like TERRY AND THE PIRATES. He was going to meet the Dragon Lady. And here he is, bugging the households of innocent people, and really defending the Gulf & Western Company. That's not what he saw in the beginning.

So the book comes out with the first issue, and this is a regular series, so I've gotta go do the next book. And they took all the stuff with TERRY AND THE PIRATES out, and the Dragon Lady and all, and changed it to have him say that he wanted to kill Commies and Nazis.

LOU: *Oh, good lord! They did a lot of creative editing at Warren.*

DON: So I'm already crazy. Then they have the Hobie character making some really racist remark, which would never have been in my script. I get it late on a Friday afternoon, and I said, "I can't even call the office, because if I do the won't understand a word I'm saying. I gotta

and Nazis, then made a really racist remark."

give myself the weekend, so that at least I'll be coherent." I give them a call on Monday, and they said, "Well, come on in and we'll go to lunch, Don."

And I have a feeling that the thinking of some of these people is like, if they're going to do something really terrible to you, they're gonna do it behind closed doors so that they have no witnesses to what transpired. But if they figure that you're gonna go ballistic, they're going to want to put you in a public place *(Laughter.)* where there'll be all kinds of people saying, "Look at Don! Don went nuts, man! The guy just went off! Could ya believe it?"

LOU: (Laughter.) *Probably they'd have some guy behind the fern bar with a videotape machine.*

DON: Right. *(Laughter.)* So here I am sitting at the table, and talking about the motivation concerning the Dragon Lady. And they said, "Nobody knows who the Dragon Lady is." And I said, "Well, I think it's become part of the lexicon. You can even look it up in the dictionary. It doesn't matter whether or not they know TERRY AND THE PIRATES. And we're talking about comics, and you say we can't even make references to TERRY AND THE PIRATES? And then you wanna change it to Commies and Nazis?" The least they could have done was call me if they had a problem with it, let me work it out with them.

So then they come to the racist comment, and they said, "Well, we know how your characters would speak, Don." I took that magazine and I flung it across the restaurant. And they said, "Well, whatdja wanna do that for, Don?" And people were starting to look around in the restaurant, all startled and everything. I said, "Because we've got nothing left to talk about. If these are the reasons you give me, you spend a half hour reading my script, a script I spent two months on, and you're gonna tell me you know better than me how my characters would speak? Obviously we have nothing left to talk about." So it's a kind of craziness. And your name is going on this book, not those people, and I told this to them. And I said, "I have to live with that book, not you. You want to put racist statements in your book, you put it under your name, not mine." Sorry about that.

LOU: *That's all right.*

DON: *(Laughter.)* It still angers me to this day. So anyhow, I had to go back to write the next one, and I couldn't go back and write the next book with the knowledge of what could happen with that series. Finally, we got that straightened out to where we could communicate and put that thing together.

LOU: *And you went on to do quite a few other things for Warren. Now I'm going to go back and ask you about DRAGONFLAME and THE VARIABLE SYNDROME, which David Anthony Kraft published. I've just reread them, and two of my favorites in DRAGONFLAME were "Bernie Chojnacki" and "The Play It Again Sam Casablanca Blues." The latter of those was interesting in view of the take Steve Gerber did on it in HOWARD THE DUCK. And if you don't feel like talking about it, we won't.*

DON: It's not that I don't feel like talking about it, I don't recall it. *(Laughter.)*

LOU: *It's the one with Amy and Elton Drake talking in the restaurant. And in HOWARD THE DUCK, it's also Amy and Elton in the restaurant but they get interrupted by this big dude called Mad Dog, who bulls into their space. And Elton jumps on his back and starts beating on him, and yells, "I've been victimized, brutalized, but now I'm fighting back!" Which, of course, is a parody of the DRAGONFLAME tag line. But this line of questioning is going nowhere, so forget it.* (Laughter.)

DON: I remember "The Play It Again Sam Casablanca Blues," of course. I have no memory the comic you're talking about. Sorry. If I was aware of Steve's story at the time, it's possible, but I can't pull any thought out about it.

Gulacy art from DRAGONFLAME.

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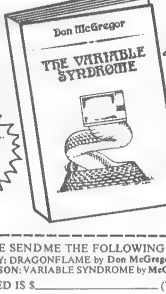

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"It was great working with David Anthony Kraft."

LOU: *Don't worry about it. That's okay.*
DON: But let me give you a few comments about working on the prose books. First of all, it was really great to be working with **David Anthony Kraft** on those books. We grouped together in the Green Kitchen Restaurant in the early morning hours, and Dave was great. Doing that book with **DAK** is one of the few pleasant memories from back then.

Here's the way Dave would operate: He would proofread the books with me, and make notations and comments and everything. If I was resistant on changing something, Dave would always go, "Well, it's your book, Don. You can do whatever you want. If you want it to come out looking bad, you know . . ." *(Laughter.)* I'd say, "Hold on a second! Lemme take another look at that. What is it, what's the problem?" *(Laughter.)* He was very good at this, getting around those things. I really enjoyed having him there. It was a really traumatic time in my life.

I learned two important lessons from the DRAGONFLAME book. Dave was the one who convinced me to do the introductions to the stories. I really didn't want to do them in the beginning. I had never used the first person, in my own voice. **DAK** was the one who got me to do it. I was resistant to do it, but he pushed me. And finally, when I did it, I was kinda glad I did, because when the mail came in from the readers, there was as much response to the introductions as there was to the stories themselves.

LOU: *Right. Kinda like a Harlan Ellison bit.*

DON: One of the interesting things about it was that when people saw the book, it was like six months to a year from the time I'd written it. To the audience, though, that was the current time of my life. So all the mail was reflective about what had happened to me a year ago. And my life had changed dramatically.

So that time lag between when the book reaches its audience, and what's going on with you personally, that was interesting. Also, because it was a collection of stories, every story in there was somebody's favorite and somebody's worst. You know, somebody'd write in and say, "Don, this is a great piece of writing. I loved this story. I can't believe the same person, though, could write this piece of garbage over here! *(Laughter.)* How could you possibly do that?" It really put it into perspective for me that not every story's going to appeal to everybody, and you'd better be able to live with that.

LOU: (Laughter.) *That's very true.*
DON: They're the two major lessons I got from doing those two books. I regret, though, that I don't have a second printing of the DRAGONFLAME book. I gave them out, and now I only have a couple of copies of the first printing.

But the other thing I wanted to say is that my daughter, Lauren, who's 22 now, just recently read those books within the past year. So she's asking me questions about something that happened over almost 20 years ago. She was a little girl at the time those stories were written. A lot of the stuff in the intros is about her as a little girl. And so she's asking me about things of which I have to say, *"(Sigh) Honey, I'd have to take a look. I don't remember." (Laughter.)*

And certain things when I was looking at them — I wasn't reading the whole thing, just certain things that were germaine to what she was asking about — I said, "Jeez, I wish I had been a little more explicit here." For instance, I had forgotten that I had written THE VARIABLE SYNDROME as a comics script. And I don't remember who I originally did it for. I think it must have been for Warren. But I really don't remember. Because you get very involved in what you're doing at the present. And right now, Lady Rawhide, of course, is taking up a lot of my time. *(Laughter.)* And

"He had left another segment of his life and past behind." From DRAGONFLAME, by McGregor, art by Paul Gulacy.

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"Some of these people who do get into the business, the very things they decry, they do."

energy.

LOU: *And I guess the second DRAGONFLAME novel just got waylaid by the present-day needs and duties, right?*

DON: Uh, yeah. I really wanted to do it, just as I wanted to do AN EROTIC PRIORITY. But part of the problem is that I needed some money to survive.

LOU: *Right.*

DON: And economically, going into the time when DETECTIVES, INC. was being done as a comic, the first graphic album, it took almost two years to produce. And I hadn't signed the work-for-hire contract, so I couldn't work at Marvel. Rob was born a month after I refused to sign those contracts. That made it a very difficult time period, one of the toughest, in that I don't think I was as patient as I should have been.

I had gone through a whole bunch of stuff in the late '70s, and I think part of me felt like it was going to be a movie: You go through all this stuff and then you get through to the other side. For a while I had to go and take some other jobs. And I just didn't react well to it. I felt like, "Aw, man, I went through all this to get to here?" So I'm disappointed in myself. I wish I had been a better human being and everything.

LOU: *Yeah, but you were probably bearing up as well as you could, under the circumstances.*

DON: Well, I hope so, but I don't know. I know my wife and my kids tell me that — they're great, and they're very supportive and all — I should have been better. I should have been better for them, and better for myself.

But every decision you make in this business affects everybody else. And it's harder to do when it's not just you. You're making an artistic or creative decision. But you know it's going to have a very real consequence on the people that you love dearly.

LOU: *Have you ever been buoyed up at a time like that by comments from readers?*

DON: Oh, listen, the readers, God bless them and thank them so much! *(Laughter.)* I don't want to sound corny about that, but while it doesn't do anything for you while you're actually doing the act of writing, certainly people have been so uplifting. When you realize you've affected people's lives, and they tell you in such evocative ways that your stories have touched them. It just makes me

Dragonflame by Gulacy.

resolved again that what we do is very important. I have no *naivete* about this being able to change all the bad things in the world or anything like that, but it's important that we remember we're reaching a vast amount of people. We can give them hope, we can bring a lot of things into their lives.

I got a letter one time from somebody in one of the issues of SABRE. This was from a person who worked in the terminally ill ward of a hospital. And that's just something, Lou, that I could not do. But he was saying that SABRE gave him the support to go back in and face that the next day. And my response to him was, "You know, I can't do what you do. I don't have that kind of courage. And if these books can help you do that, then that's what they're there for." If I can do something like that, if I can help in that manner, then I feel like, yeah, I can go back to that blank sheet of paper and face it again.

So the readers very often have been very helpful. Thank God for the readers, because there certainly were a lot of times when certain editors were nowhere near as enthusiastic. *(Laughter.)* And some of those people I got to be friends with. There were people that I met through the letters pages whom I would never have had a chance to meet otherwise, so that was really great, too. A lot of them went on to become names which are very well known in the comics industry now, but they weren't then. I really felt privileged to know a lot of those people. I include **Dean Mullaney** in that, and a whole bunch of other people. All the names have just flown out of my head right now. *(Laughter.)* **Ed Vis** is also one of the people I met through the letters pages.

You know, one of the things which is strange is that some of these people who do get into the business, the very things they decry when they weren't in the position to do anything about it — when they get in there, they do the same things. They have the same narrow-mindedness, the same way of handling things in terms of the way they treat talent and the restrictions they try to force on this wonderful medium of comics. They end up perpetrating the very thing that they railed against when they weren't a part of the system. Then they themselves become part of that system, and perpetuate the system. That's the sad part of it, when you see that.

LOU: *That's true. One of the things that cracked me up recently was when Dave Kraft told me about a guy we both know who's been fired from three or four companies already, and he's with a new company now. And Dave said, "He's just like an old supervillain! They can't kill him! He just keeps coming back."* (Laughter from both.)

DON: Well, like I told **Charlie Novinskie,** no way that Machete's coming back! He's dead! He's dead! *(Laughter.)* And Charlie would say, "Eh, I think his horse is dead, but I don't know." *(Laughter.)*

"'Panther's Quest' — that's the book I really wish

LOU: *If he gets killed again, he has to give up his other hand.*

DON: I'll tell Charlie that. He'll get a kick out of it. He's a lot of fun to work with.

LOU: *Okay, we've covered most of your history one way or the other. One of the things I wanted to say is that I've usually come away from your work with three impressions. One is your love for the heroic ideal, another one is your sensitivity, and the third is your verbosity. Any comments?*

DON: *(Pause, then laughter.)* I don't know what to say!

LOU: *Okay, we'll skip that one.*

DON: *(Laughter.)* **Don McGregor** at a loss for words? I thought that guy was verbose, but — yikes!

LOU: *Yeah, right. Okay, I'll give you an easier one. You've been toiling in this vineyard for almost 25 years. How would you like to be noted in its history?*

DON: Say what?! *(Laughter.)* You know, people in this industry have all these grandiose plans on how they're going to be seen historically. I just want to sit down and write the best stories I can, and give an audience the best comic book that's possible. I hope that it's recognized that I always loved comics, thought they were a worthwhile medium, and brought stories to them that, hopefully, were personally my own and that some people responded to favorably.

LOU: *That's good. Hit me with a couple of Gene Colan stories.*

DON: *(Laughter.)* Well, let's see. Working with Gene is tremendous. It's just one of those things in which I knew Gene's work from before I got to work in comics, and then getting to work with him was exciting. Couple of stories here. First one: When we were doing NATHANIEL DUSK II, I had a character named Lice Williams. Obviously, just from the name alone, you get the idea of what kind of guy he was. *(Laughter.)* I had told Gene that I wanted this guy to look like he had no truck with other people, with average human beings. You see this guy, you run across to the other side of the street. And I wanted him to look like he'd been in the electric chair, but the only thing the juice did was to spike his hair up on end and bleach the color out of his flesh. *(Laughter.)*

So I get a call from Gene one night, and Gene says, "Hey, Don. I don't think I can do Lice Williams right. I know what you've got down there, but I think it's gonna come out too cartoony, and I just don't feel I can do it that way." And I said, "Well, I really think you can pull it off, Gene." And Gene said, "Jeez, I don't know if I can. But I knew this guy in the 1930s . . ." And he went on for about half an hour, talking about how this guy dressed, and what he did and everything. He said, "I think I'm gonna draw the guy like that for Lice." And I said, "You know, Gene, if you feel more comfortable with that, I don't want you drawing something you're not comfortable with, because it's going to be a chore to do the rest of this book. So go ahead."

The next week the pages come in, and Lice Williams looks exactly, exactly like I asked for! *(Laughter.)* So I called Gene up and said, "Excuse me, Gene, because I know my memory can be bad and all. But did you call me about midnight some night last week, and didn't we talk for about two hours on how you were going to do this guy that you knew in the 1930s?" And I was going on and on, and Gene said, "Yeah, Don. But I figured you really wanted him to look that way, so I went back to the original description you had." And, of course, he had Lice nailed dead on!

Another time Gene calls up, and we're doing DETECTIVES, INC. together. I wanted pictures of Hopalong Cassidy up on the wall between Denning and Rainier. Part of it was because, obviously, Hopalong Cassidy is one of my influences and my favorites. But also it was an in-joke for people in the know, because **Gene Colan** used to draw the HOPALONG CASSIDY comic for DC. So it worked on two separate levels, and it certainly worked for Denning and Rainier. These are guys who really loved the **B**-Westerns and what they stood for. And they're trying to make this stuff real in New York City! *(Laughter.)* An impossible task, I tell you!

LOU: *(Laughter.) Well, they hadn't made THE COWBOY WAY yet.*

DON: Right. So Gene calls me up and says, "Hey, Don. I don't know where that stuff is. How about if I just put the Maltese Falcon in there, and Bogie and such?" I said, "Well, I think it would be nice the other way, Gene, but if you don't have it, I understand. So, sure, go ahead,

Nathaniel Dusk on the prowl, from "Apple Peddlers Die at Noon," pencils by McGregor & Colan.

they would collect into a bookshelf edition."

do that. I'd rather have it the other way, but what the hell."

Next week comes, and there's **William Boyd, Hopalong Cassidy,** hanging up on the wall *(Laughter.)* I called up Gene and said, "Gene, didn't we have a phone call? Are you trying to drive me out of my mind?"

And then one time I got a call from Gene, when we were doing "Panther's Quest," which is a story set in South Africa. That's the book I really wish they would collect into a bookshelf edition. It's spread over 25 different issues of MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS. And Gene did a wonderful job on it. But anyway, Gene calls me one night, and we had a sequence in there about necklacing, the tire-burning of victims.

LOU: *Which really happens, by the way. The Communists really do it.*

DON: It's a complex, tragically violent situation, which is one of the reasons I felt it must be included in the storyline. But I'd been playing around for the longest time with that scene. I knew I was going to do the tire-necklace ceremony. I knew I was going to have that happen. And right up to the point where I actually wrote the sequence, I had gone different ways that it was going to turn out. And there was none of them that I actually felt strongly about. Like, "Ehh, this is okay, and I can probably go with this."

But I had never intended to bring the little kid, Theodore Olebogeng, back into the story. Now Theodore was called Theodore after the kid in LEAVE IT TO BEAVER. That's why his brother's name was Wally.

LOU: *Okay. "Gee, Wally."*

DON: Imagine the Beav and Wally living in South Africa, okay? *(Laughter.)* Here they are in the sequence, where the little boy ends up getting burned. There's a whole chapter in there where the Black Panther takes the little boy to a white hospital, and forces them to work on the kid. They really do try to save him, but the kid dies at the end of the chapter. So I thought that it was a very strong chapter, and made the point that I wanted to make. I felt that it was dramatically very, very valid.

So I got a call from Gene one night, and Gene said to me, "Listen, Don. About that sequence with the kid . . ." And I said, "Yeah?" And Gene goes, "You know, I can't draw it. I changed it. I'm sorry, but I had to change it."

I said, "What do you mean, you changed it?" Gene says, "Well, you know, I had to . . . the kid lives." I said, "What?" *(Laughter.)* Gene says, "The kid lives, Don. I couldn't, it was just too sad, too tragic. I just can't . . . I'm telling you, I tried to draw it, but it was just tearing me up. I can't draw it, Don. Don't ask me to draw it, Don. I just can't draw it, Don." And I'm getting really desperate and panicky in my voice and Gene can hear it. I'm going, "But, but Gene . . .!" I said, "You don't understand. If you change it, it changes everything that this scene is about. It will not communicate what I feel we should be communicating. We will totally lose it." And Gene's going, "I'm sorry, Don, but I just can't. It's too harsh. I just can't do it."

PANTHER'S QUEST
LAST NIGHT
I WEPT FOR FREEDOM
If a man has not wept in the world a pain he is only half a man, and there will always be pain in the world. Knowing this does not mean that a man shall despair. A good man will seek to take the pain out of things. A tool will help him, even nobler, if he is strong enough. And the poor unfortunate man will drive himself mad with his own things and up-and-about anxious neighbors.
THEY ARE THE PANTHER'S VAN. THE PANTHER'S BEHIND IT. THE KID IS THE ONE
HE KNOWS THIS IS WRONG. HE'S GOT TO DO SOMETHING. BUT WHAT? IT'S NOT AS IF HE'S GOING TO BREAK IN A PANIC THROUGH THAT CROWD OF BLACK FACES AND POSSIBLY KILL SOME OF THEM.
THEY ARE GOING TO BURN THE KID!
I CAN'T DRAW IT. I CHANGED IT. I'M SORRY, BUT I HAD TO CHANGE IT.
I'M SORRY, DON, BUT I JUST CAN'T. IT'S TOO HARSH. I JUST CAN'T DO IT.

Splash page art from "necklace" sequence in Part XV of "Panther's Quest" by McGregor & Colan.

And we're going on, and finally Gene stops and says, "I'm just kiddin' ya, Don. I drew it just the way you wanted." *(Laughter.)* "Yeaaah, you got me, man!"

But we love working together. And one more quick story: One time Adrienne, Gene's wife, told me they were driving around . . . I had been waiting for years for Gene to draw RAGAMUFFINS. I'd had that series planned out for years. But I wanted to do it with Gene. Have we talked about RAGAMUFFINS at all?

LOU: *Not in detail — go ahead with the story here.*

DON: I'll fill you in quickly about this.

"Dark Horse has approached me about PREDATOR."

For years, I wanted Gene to do that book. Eclipse was willing to do it, but Gene was tied up under contract to Marvel for a long time and couldn't draw it. And even though they suggested some really top-name artists, I wanted Gene to draw this book. I just felt that this book was not going to have all the fist-fights and bigger-than-life stuff going on. It was going to depend on what the reactions are on these kids' faces to whatever happens to them.

So I waited all this time for Gene to be available. So what he did in the first storyline is, with little Randy, his mother crosses him over the main street and is sending him off to school. He's going off to kindergarten. And there's a moment there where his mother is lecturing him about all the things she wants him to do, and he's like zoning out. He's listening to her, but everything's going in one ear and out the other. Finally she says, "Okay, go on your way." And she turns around with his little sister and walks away.

And I told Gene in the script, I wanted us to see, as soon as Randy turns around, there's this look on his face, and now there's this incredible smile. In his eyes there's this look like anything can happen, anything is possible. Now he's loose. Everything's in free rein. There's nobody to hold him in check, and he can be anything his imagination wants him to be. It's gotta all be captured in this on split instant, in this panel.

When I saw that panel, he had it. Nailed.

So one day I was talking with Adrienne, and she said that she and Gene were driving along and Gene all of a sudden said, "Adrienne, look! There's Don's Randy over there! See him sitting over there? That's what the kid's supposed to be doing!" *(Laughter.)* Gene would be so much inside my head, he'd just have those kids down, it was like he was right with me.

So RAGAMUFFINS is one of the books that I'm really glad I had the chance to do. I hope I have the chance to do more of them in the future. Eventually, what I'd like to do is this: You always saw the flash-forwards in the story that took you ahead in the Ragamuffins' lives. We're also going to be doing some stuff where we go back and see the kids' parents as Ragamuffins in the '20s and '30s. And so what you get is really a tapestry of America.

But at the same time, a lot of this book is about what adults say to kids and think they're teaching kids, but what kids are really learning. *(Laughter.)* And they're two separate animals

LOU: *Right! So what do you hope to be achieving in the future of your career — all the stuff, writing comics, movies, the whole nine yards?*

DON: Lou, do you think there's a game plan going on here? *(Laughter.)*

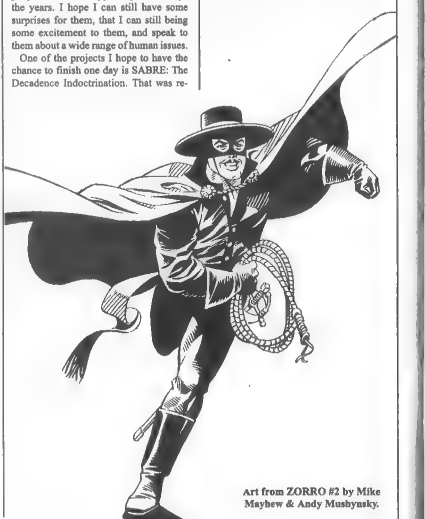
LOU: *No. I don't.*

DON: Man, if there's a game plan going on here, I'm sure doing it in a strange way!

LOU: *Yeah, right.* (Laughter.)

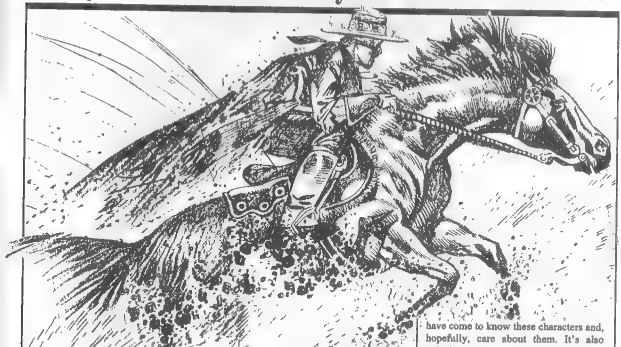
DON: I really have no idea, Lou. Whatever the next project is, here's what I know. Whatever it is, whether it's comics or film or prose, it's gonna be the best that I can give to the audience out there. That's what they deserve, that's what I owe them, and that's what I'm gonna be trying to do. And I hope that I get a chance to get to do that a lot more times down the road. I'm really glad there have been people out there supporting me through the years. I hope I can still have some surprises for them, that I can still being some excitement to them, and speak to them about a wide range of human issues.

One of the projects I hope to have the chance to finish one day is SABRE: The Decadence Indoctrination. That was really the most ambitious graphic novel in the heroic/fantasy motif that I've ever done, and readers have had the chance to see only the first 125 pages of what was intended to be a six- to seven-hundred page endeavor. I know they called "Slow Fade of an Endangered Species" a graphic novel, but in truth, no matter how much was packed into that story, it's still only 38 pages and you cannot approximate the pacing and structure of a novel in that space. "An Exploitation of Everything Dear" is more novelistic in approach, but it still has more a climax than a beginning and middle. Dean wanted me to bring Sabre and Melissa back for an anniversary issue, but it was in that timeframe when I was starting to research Zorro and create the first slew of characters for that series, so I had to pass it by because my energies and time were committed at that point to **Jim Sallcrup** and ZORRO.



Art from ZORRO #2 by Mike Mayhew & Andy Mushynsky.

"Lady Rawhide's not in any! What a career move!"



Still and all, the first person who comes to me and says you can do "The Decadence Indoctrination" the way you originally envisioned doing it, Don, as scary as it will be going back to such a project after such an absence, I'll do it. DETECTIVES, INC. will definitely return. I live with those characters all the time in the video, I love them dearly, and I want to write that story concerning the bombing of abortion clinics, so somewhere, sometime, I'll be right in the thick of things with Denning and Rainier. I've talked with **Bob Schreck** at Dark Horse about the possibilities, and he likes the series, so there's a chance you might see those humble private eyes return there. We'll see. **Dwayne MacDuffie** at Milestone has approached me about doing a story for them, and I pitched an idea to Dwayne that's really strong, and he didn't even blink, and Dwayne has so very kind to me over the years, that there's a possibility I'll undertake that project at some point. It's something I feel is worth writing about.

Bob Cooper at Dark Horse has approached me about writing a PREDATOR series, and I'm toying with the notion of writing a story that deals with the education system as it stands in a big city like New York. You can see I want to do a contemporary story-line. And I said I'd do the story where the Panther and Monica Lynne marry, "Panther's Vows." And of course, if Marvel can make a deal with **Craig Russell**, I'll finish the last, absolutely, Killraven.

But I won't do anything that would make me unable to keep my commitment to Jim and Zorro and Lady Rawhide. If Jim needs something, and I can help him, hell, he knows I'll give it the best shot I have. I love working in such a rich, creative atmosphere, a place where we can all share ideas and approaches to the books. I've recently finished the latest four-part Zorro story-arc, and I think it's going to catch all the Zorro fans off-guard and knock them for a loop! You'll see some traumatic events concerning many of the supporting cast, situations I don't think anyone is expecting. We're upping the whole emotional stakes with these characters and for Zorro! It is the kind of story that can have more impact now than it could a year ago, because the readers have come to know these characters and, hopefully, care about them. It's also suited as an introduction for people who haven't read the series before.

When we come back with the first set of four issues, Lady Rawhide's not in any of them! *(Laughter.)* Hey, what a game plan that is! What a career move! You always know how to make the right choice, Don! That's the one thing we've always said about you — you know how to make the right choice!

LOU: (Laughter.) *Somewhere or another.*

DON: *(Laughter.)* Ahh, maybe they didn't say that. (Laughter.)

LOU: (Laughter.) *But it'll be cool, anyways.*

What's your favorite comic done by somebody other than yourself?

"Hold your horses, Zorro," coos Lady Rawhide, "while I whip something up." Pencil art above by Mike Mayhew from ZORRO #7, and below from LADY RAWHIDE #1, inks by Jimmy Palmiotti.

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"The thing Stan Lee did was to bring Caniff and Gould to superhero comics."

DON: Probably a choice between **Hal Foster's** PRINCE VALIANT and **Milt Caniff's** TERRY AND THE PIRATES. I probably lean more towards TERRY. Also **Chester Gould's** DICK TRACY from the early '40s to the early '50s. Also Marvels from the early '60s, the work that **Stan Lee** and **Jack Kirby** and **Steve Ditko** and **Gene Colan** did. And **Jack Cole's** PLASTIC MAN, **Mac Raboy's** FLASH GORDON, and **Watterson's** CALVIN AND HOBBES. Just to read some of **Watterson's** stuff on a Sunday, what a treat! They're incredibly good. **Leonard Starr's** ON STAGE, one of the best written strips ever; Starr's superb at spinning characters deftly. I wish I could keep up with current stuff more.

But I think that **Hal Foster** was one of the greatest. His dedication to PRINCE VALIANT is evident throughout the whole strip. And having seen it at different time periods, you know he had to be going through times when he was tired, or maybe something had come up in his life that was difficult. But you never see it reflected in the strip. The work and intent was always there.

Milton Caniff was just a master storyteller. I always felt that the major thing that **Stan Lee** did was to bring **Milton Caniff** and **Chester Gould** into comic books, in terms of the continuity of characters, integrating what was going on in their personal lives with the storylines, the action or adventure that was happening. He just brought that to superhero comics.

I'm sure Stan followed the strips in question. I think that's the major contribution he made: "Let's do that in comic books. Why can't we do it?"

Oh, and I almost forgot **Elzie Segar's** POPEYE. What incredible storytelling! In comic books it's hard to beat **Steranko's** Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. books. I was thrilled by them, and after being in the business was more impressed realizing how hard Jim had to fight to give those books existence.

LOU: *Here's a question for you. I always thought you and Doug Moench did the best titles for stories in the 1970s. What's your favorite story title?*

DON: *(Laughter.)* Aw jeez! Well, oh, man, I don't know! I work very hard at them. Sometimes I might even have a title before I have a story. A title is something that can give me an anchor on a storyline. The Lady Rawhide storyline which is coming up is called "It Can't Happen Here."

LOU: *Ah, you and Sinclair Lewis.*

DON: Well, it was really inspired by the fact that we see so many really psychotically violent things happening all over the place. And I think people get to feeling, "Well, that's over in New York City, that's in California, that's in Little Rock, that's not over here." But in fact, that can happen anywhere at any time. Once I had that phrase, "It Can't Happen Here," which I was just thinking of as something for a character to say, I thought, "Wait a minute. This can be a refrain, and we can examine this idea, thematically, all different kinds of things about people thinking 'it can't happen here.'" Of course, there's nothing further from the truth than that phrase.

So once I had that title — even though I don't think that's one of Charlie's favorite titles *(Laughter.)* — it worked out. I'm working on the Zorro/Lone Ranger teamup, and that's called "Killing Time." *(Laughter.)* Those titles come very much into play.

LOU: *You know, there's one character in the Black Panther series I wondered what happened to, and you won't believe who it is when I tell you. It's Venomm.*

DON: Oh, Venomm is in "Panther's Prey." See, when I first came back, I didn't want to deal with that whole supporting cast in a story set in South Africa. But when I came back to do the *next* series, I knew there were a lot of old readers who were going to want to see what happened to Venomm and W'Kabi and Taku and all of those characters.But of course, since Venomm and Taku were lovers, they were the first homosexuals in Marvel Comics, as far as I know. But I had to be very, very careful with that one. I could only, only hint at it.

When we were going to do the interracial kiss in Killraven between M'Sulla and Carmilla Frost, we had one artist threaten to walk off the book if it threatened to turn into a salt-and-pepper relationship. I got called into the editor's office, and he told me, "You're not going to be doing anything like this, are you?" At the time, it was more or less like Modesty Blaise and Willie Garvin. But I felt that if I built it up long enough, the readers would start to say, "Jeez, Don, when are you going to let them kiss?" *(Laughter.)* And then I could receive enough letters from the readers to show Stan. Again, God bless the readers, they came through like gangbusters. That's the reason I was finally able to say, "I want to go see Stan."

So we went up to Stan and said, "You know, I hate to see Marvel go behind DC, because Marvel's always been ahead in doing things. And, gee, they did an interracial thing in one of their romance comics, and Marvel hasn't done it yet. Here we have a chance to do this, and the reason I'm asking is to get permission for it." *(Laughter.)* The compromise was that we could do the scene, but color it in knockout colors, which means they would be all in purple.

LOU: *Yeah, so you wouldn't be able to tell that one was black and one was white.*

DON: But go back through that issue of AMAZING ADVENTURES #31 and you'll see that it's not in knockout color. And when it came out, of course, I got called on the carpet again. "I thought this was supposed to be in knockout colors!" *(Laughter.)* "Jeez, it isn't? What happened there? Oh, my God, you're right. Well, hey, looks pretty good, doesn't it?

LOU: (Laughter.) *That's cool.*

It wouldn't be complete without this, gang —

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"I'm working on the Zorro/Lone Ranger teamup. It's called 'Killing Time.'"

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LAST WORD

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PHANTOM ARTIST

Dear DAK;

In typesetting that PHANTOM interview, I naturally corrected Darrel's misbearing of **Bill Ligaante's** name. That's me, the guy who not only knows everything, but spells it correctly to boot. (What would you do without me?)

I see **Ligaante's** work is popular in Australia. Too bad he did so little newspaper continuity — six months or so of Sundays. But he did regular work on the PHANTOM comic *book* Gold Key and later King Comics put out starting in 1962. That's the series, by the way, that was later taken over by Charlton, where it was drawn by **Jim Aparo.** If **Ligaante's** work sells so well for them, why don't they reprint some of those?

By the way, The Phantom is *far* from the only comics character that has new stories written and drawn in diverse parts of the world. But of course, who in the industry takes any notice of Disney?

— Don Markstein

CORRECTION?
THE PHANTOM VS. THE PHANTOM: Publishers & Distributors "Down Under"

To David Anthony Kraft's COMICS INTERVIEW:

King Features Syndicate has decided to move one of their most important characters into a higher gear in anticipation of a world wide frenzy. With a growing profile fueled by an animated series, a newspaper strip and an upcoming movie, The Phantom is beginning to look like another major money spinner.

Despite the growing profile, The Phantom has been out of regular print in the United Sates since DC's PHANTOM came to a rather abrupt end in the late '80s. About three years ago King Features sought to fill the gap by allowing The Phantom to be reinvented in the form of a Marvel Comics limited series. Orchestrated by King Features and working under the auspices of Marvel, two Australians were scheduled to execute the project. The result has been a popular revival of one of the world's most recognized heroes.

Popular it may be for some, although not everyone is content with the success of Marvel's reworked Phantom.

Frew Publications is an Australian publishing company devoted to printing and reprinting tales of The Phantom, an American creation. Frew has been publishing The Phantom in Australia since 1948, a country where The Phantom's popularity leaves its nearest superhero competitors a good few miles behind.

In an unusual reversal of circumstances, signs of less than ideal relations developed when Australian creators were hired to produce a work which would ultimately and ironically be published by Americans.

Frew's domination of The Phantom publishing arena has largely remained unchallenged for most of its publishing life. The Phantom has only sporadically been in print in the print in the United States and the success of these infrequent pot shots has been intermittent at best. With little or no threat posing itself from across the Pacific, Frew could quietly and contentedly carry on publishing with only the occasional tummy upset.

Perhaps until now. Marvel's PHANTOM is rumoured to have sold 30,000 copies in Australia alone. That's no small feat for a nation the size of Australia where any comic that surpasses the 15,000 mark is considered a runaway success. In the face of Marvel's PHANTOM selling out nationally, **Jim Shepherd,** president of Frew Publications, explained why Marvel's Phantom will never reach the Australian newsstands. "Frew Publications holds the publishing rights to The Phantom comics in Australia, New Zealand and several Pacific areas such as Papua New Guinea. Marvel has the contract to produce a Phantom comic book for distribution in the United States on the basis that they are not allowed to sell the product at a full retail level in Australia. Marvel were aware of that as of May last year. It's all quite clear cut. This is how the Phantom comic is published all over the world."

May of last year was 20 months after the Australian creators were brought on board to handle the chores. That leaves an unexplained 20 months interim where Jim's apprehensions about the restyled Phantom remain unaccounted-for.

These apprehensions would appear to stem first from sales. Jim commented that, "Marvel, if they had the rights to distribute at full retail level in Australia, let's be honest, all they'd have to do is ship in an extra fifty to sixty thousand copies and their colour product would be up against our black and white." Jim said that it would be economic suicide for him to even attempt to compete on an equal plane with a glossy, full colour, ultra large scale print run Phantom.

In an examination of just how equal the plane would be, Frew's Phantom sells off the shelf for AU$1.50. Marvel's Phantom sold at a price which equates to approximately AU$6.00 or US$2.95. The price discrepancy might be expected to dispel any fears of the two comics being in head-to-head competition. Frew's Phantom has been a stalwart of Australian comic book shelves for decades. It's not likely to disappear in a flash. Conversely Marvel's LEE FALK'S THE PHANTOM: THE GHOST WHO WALKS was never intended to be anything more than a three issue limited series. One might say that Jim is simply being very cautious.

Jim's cautiousness towards Marvel would appear to have some justification. Jim views Marvel as an interloper, a company without a passion for The Phantom. Marvel has never before published The Phantom. By Jim's reckoning Marvel hasn't contributed in the slightest to the cult phenomenon that constitutes The Phantom. Jim commented that he "can't think of one good reason why we should open up the flood gates to a company that has never put in a cent, that hasn't had any input at all in building up the strength of the character."

Jim Shepherd and King Features representatives allegedly visited Marvel in

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New York with the express purpose of having Australian newsstand sales of Marvel's Phantom blocked, thereby effectively denying Marvel a chance to build up the strength of the character.

Numerous attempts were allegedly made to compensate Frew Publications for allowing a large scale release of LEE FALK'S THE PHANTOM: THE GHOST WHO WALKS. The intention was to allay any feelings that Frew Publications was under threat from the Marvel production or that Frew's sales were being undermined. Frew Publications reputedly refused these offers.

In addition, Jim has gone on record in Australian media outlets stating his disdain for the new Phantom. Whilst he's "pleased to see two Aussies making a go of it," he still feels that Marvel's Phantom is out of kilter with sixty years of Phantom fashion; the slick technology and situations of the distinctly Marvelized Phantom were too far removed from **Jim Shepherd's** view of a classic Phantom story. As a result, when asked whether or not he thought the revamped Phantom was out of synch with the traditional Phantom Jim's response was a decisive, "Yes."

Jim cited the absence of mainstay characters such as Hero, Devil and Diana as reason for fan confusion. Without the stable cast members it's not the Phantom. Like STAR TREK without Picard or Data, it's just not kosher. With the omission of the regular characters Jim said long-term fans would be left confused as to which Phantom LEE FALK'S THE PHANTOM: THE GHOST WHO WALKS was actually showcasing. The unexpected absence caused Jim to believe that Marvel had given birth to the 22nd Phantom. "That was not made clear in the first issue but he obviously is."

The two principal creators of Marvel's Phantom were **Dave deVries** and **Glenn Lumsden.** They said they were surprised by the comic book specialty store only release and by **Jim Shepherd's** less than glowing appraisal of the reworked Phantom. Until October of last year both Glenn and Dave were still under the impression that their Phantom would be hitting the newsstands. The news that an embargo was being enforced on the newsstand release came as somewhat of a shock.

"We assumed it would be just a normal Marvel release. The first hint we had that there might be some form of limitation was when Glenn first approached **Jim Shepherd,**" said Dave. "He was visiting Sydney and, as a courtesy, he went to see **Jim Shepherd.** Jim was very much involved in the early stages of helping to put our Phantom together. I'm a bit disappointed by the comments he's made in the papers recently about how he feels that our Phantom is not quite *au fait* with the traditional Phantom because a lot of what we've done he knew about right at the beginning and actually gave him support to."

"The first time I went to see Jim I said this is going to be great for us," said Glenn. "I think it can be great for everyone. We can all be winners here. Maybe we can do bits of cross promotion. We'll happily do covers and stuff for the Frew Phantom. We all appear as a unified team and say, 'The Phantom, he's great and now he's even greater with a new three part miniseries.' I can't see how it could threaten Jim's sales figures one jot. If anything it might enhance them because you might get people who don't read the normal Phantom who are Marvel readers who then read it and go on to pick up Jim's and give that a go. I can't see how he can lose. I can only see how we can all win.

"It even got so far as Jim was toying with the idea of getting us to draw up a five or six page retelling of the Phantom's origin. We had it scheduled in and suddenly Jim rang one day and said he'd talked to King Features and they'd said, 'Oh, Jim, maybe you shouldn't have anything to do with these guys.' Now we've dealt with King Features as well and I find it very hard to believe that those words came out of their mouths."

Dave and Glenn liken such a situation to stealing from yourself. All the signs indicate that King Features are doing everything possible to enhance the popularity of The Phantom. In the eyes of Dave and Glenn, the advent of the PHANTOM 2040 cartoon and the movie are going to do nothing more than boost awareness of The Phantom. In trying to consolidate the circumstances, Dave and Glenn were left perplexed as to why King Features would suddenly wish to stifle the sales and popularity of one of its flagship characters. After spending so much time piecing the project together, Dave and Glenn saw no reason why King Features would suddenly refuse additional exposure, royalties and profit.

Dave expressed his disbeliefs by saying, "I can't believe King Features would turn their backs on 50,000 sales. By Jim's own numbers that's the sort of sales they could expect." The figure of 50,000 sales relates to the newsstand sales that Dave believes King Features stand to miss out on. **Jim Shepherd** has also reputedly claimed sales of 50,000 copies of his own Frew Publications Phantom.

If the consternation, animosity and back-pedaling is a result of some feud between Marvel and King Features Syn-

dicate, neither Glenn nor Dave have caught wind of it. Dave countered any claims of a feud when he expressed that whilst it was difficult to co-ordinate everyone at the preliminary stages of the project, no real friction developed between Marvel and the powers resident at King Features.

"**Lee Falk** definitely wanted this project to go ahead," stated Dave. "Even though Lee has the right to veto anything and everything, he hasn't exercised that right at all on the Marvel version. He's asked for minor modifications to be made but no more than by any other editor. So in a sense I've felt that the true editor of the book has been **Lee Falk**."

In response to **Jim Shepherd's** claims about the new-look Phantom being less a Phantom than **Lee Falk's** original, Dave was quite emphatic. "I believe we've kept very true to the spirit of **Lee Falk's** Phantom as I believe Lee Falk feels."

If **Jim Shepherd's** concerns originate from a feeling that there's just too much Phantom out there, Dave and Glenn's opinions don't seem to concur. Both of The Phantom creators see no intrinsic problem in concurrently running a variety of different takes on The Phantom. The argument runs along the lines that if Batman can hold down a zillion continuities without any averse sales effects, why shouldn't work for the Phantom? In relation to his take on The Phantom Dave said, "Our Phantom is as much The Phantom as the Batman movies are Batman or the Batman animated cartoon is Batman. Nobody has said that the Batman of the TV show was more a Batman than the movie one."

Glenn added, "It's like with Coca-Cola, you try to replace the classic Coke with some new formula — you get bedlam. You put Cherry Coke and Diet Coke alongside Coke and you get more sales. People don't suddenly stop drinking Coke and only drink Cherry Coke. You usually get increased sales. This Phantom is exactly the same. It sits along side the regular Phantom as an extra Phantom for the people who can't get enough Phantom."

Which begs the question, what is the regular Phantom? Dave explained that Australian readers have been used to reading tales of the 21st Phantom from across the spectrum of his career within the bounds of a single Frew issue. In one story Diana may be married and in the next she's not present at all. In some stories the Phantom might be resident in Bengala. In the next story it might be Bengali or perhaps Bengal. A miraculous transposition of continents was never impossible. In the earlier Phantom stories the location was distinctly Africa. In more recent stories the Phantom is firmly entrenched in Asia. It all depends on when the story was written and by whom. By Dave's admission, the inclusion or exclusion of a location or character in the Marvel version means nothing. Even though some of the more recognized characters are missing, Dave stressed that the Marvelized Phantom is definitely the 21st.

Although **Jim Shepherd** may be struggling with which Phantom is starring in the new version, his "fan confusion" seems to have evaporated. LEE FALK'S THE PHANTOM: THE GHOST WHO WALKS sold out nationally within the span of a few days. Comic retailers who thought they had their orders covered suddenly found themselves going as far as Seattle to restock the shelves. "If this is something people don't want then they're expressing their dissatisfaction in a remarkably strange way," Dave said in response to the hefty sales.

In the wake of the sell out, Glenn and Dave embarked on a comic shop tour of the south eastern seaboard of Australia where they found the fan response to be overwhelming.

The two creators remarked that the appeal of meeting the imagination behind the latest incarnation of the Phantom drew a crowd unrivaled by other creator tours.

Both creators believed that part of the impressive attendance could be attributed to many of the country's Phantom fans viewing the tour as their one and only chance to purchase a copy of the Marvel PHANTOM.

Commenting on the strong fan response Dave was quick to point out that THE PHANTOM more or less sold itself. Dave felt the high tour attendance and strong sales were testimony to the extreme popularity of the character in Australia. In addition he said he would be surprised if Frew Publications had not reaped some advantage out of the publicity that came running after The Phantom.

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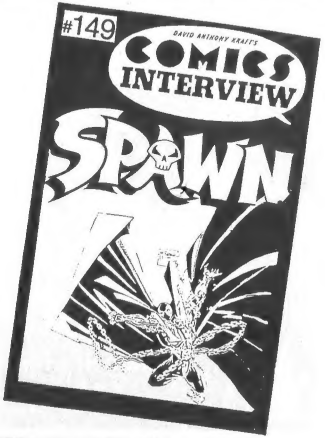

LAST WORD

Comics Interview 234 Fifth Ave. Suite 301 New York, NY 10001

With the Marvel Phantom having sold out in almost every location they visited, Dave noted that fans were more than eager to pick up a copy of the remaining Frew issues still on the racks.

Glenn and Dave said they found themselves inundated by fans requesting them to sign almost anything Phantom related. Whether is was a jacket, pen or a copy of the Frew Publications Phantom the fans seemed overjoyed to have an item signed by Phantom creators. To the public, the Phantom was still the Phantom no matter who was publishing him.

Whether or not the tour was viewed as a money grabbing tactic on Marvel's behalf was inconsequential to Glenn and Dave. "You can't be more successful than a sellout," commented Dave in response to whether they stood to boost their income from the tour. Both Glenn and Dave expressed a devotion to the readers as the main cause for the tour.

Glenn said, "We're going to do everything in our power to make sure that everyone who wants THE PHANTOM gets THE PHANTOM." Whether it means that people in country areas who normally rely on the newsagents have to ring their state comic shops in order to get a PHANTOM, they'll get a PHANTOM." They went on to say that the tour actually left them slightly in the red and that monetary gain was far from the prime motive for the tour. The issue of money and how much of it anyone stood to gain was encapsulated by Dave, who said, "Not only are we being denied sales, in effect **Jim Shepherd's** being denied sales, **Lee Falk** is being denied sales, King Features is being denied sales and so is Marvel Comics. So everybody's missing out. We can only conclude from this that Jim feels in his heart that he's willing to sacrifice those sales because he believes in so doing he would lose even more money if our book came into Australia. That's very flattering because it implies that he feels we have a superior product, one that would take sales away from his material. It's very flattering to us but I think it's a little bit unfair on the fans of **Lee Falk.** The thought that Phantom fans who have been reading the comic for this long would abandon **Lee Falk's** version in favour of our does seem a little absurd."

From his Sydney office, **Jim Shepherd** and Frew Publications continues to publish the popular black-and-white Phantom stories for the Australian masses, replete with the backing of King Features Syndicate. With no Phantom collaborations pending, **Dave deVries** and **Glenn Lumsden** continue to create comics from their studios in South Australia's Barossa Valley. So much for the solidarity that long time Phantom fans might have anticipated. In retrospect perhaps matters could have run smoother but that's just hindsight. Setting aside the acrimony, there's still a Phantom out there. Now he just comes in a few different flavours.

Rohan Thompson
11 Seaview Terrace
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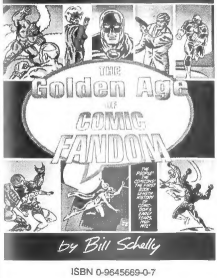

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